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# **PICEANCE BASIN**

## **Resource Management Plan Record of Decision**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
**White River Resource Area, Colorado**  
**May 1987**

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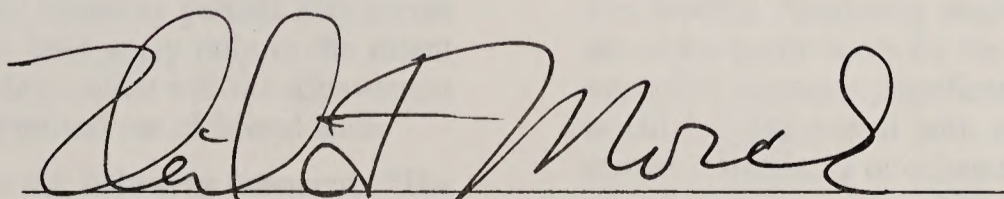
RECORD OF DECISION

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**RECORD OF DECISION  
PICEANCE BASIN  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**White River Resource Area  
Craig District  
Meeker, Colorado**



State Director  
Colorado State Office







# RECORD OF DECISION

## PICEANCE BASIN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This document records the decisions reached by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for managing 530,109 surface acres of public land and 674,370 subsurface acres in the Piceance Basin Planning Area of the White River Resource Area.

### Decision

The decision is hereby made to approve the attached plan as the resource management plan (RMP) for the Piceance Basin Planning Area of the White River Resource Area. This plan was prepared under the regulations for implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600). An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared for this plan in conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. This plan is identical to the one set forth in the proposed plan and associated final EIS (Volume 3) published in March 1985, except for the following modifications:

1. Five areas are designated as areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs). The five areas are located in Rio Blanco County, total 6,635 acres, and include Deer Gulch, Dudley Bluffs, Lower Greasewood Creek, South Cathedral Bluffs, and Yanks Gulch/Upper Greasewood Creek.
2. One area, Soldier Creek, will be designated as an ACEC, if the state designates their adjoining acreage.
3. One area, School Gulch, will be designated as an ACEC, if ongoing monitoring indicates it is necessary.
4. A socioeconomic impact mitigative stipulation for future oil shale leases is incorporated into the plan: "The lessee shall comply with all state and local laws governing any class of activity undertaken on the lease in the exercise of lease rights, including permits and license laws, except that such laws apply only to the extent they do not impermissibly conflict with the achievement of a congressionally approved use of federal lands."
5. The plan now contains the following statement: "The Secretary of the Interior has the discretion to allow exchanged or leased oil shale research lands to be redelineated or expanded to a commercial-sized lease at a later date should improved multiminerall resource recovery technology be proven." The following statements have been deleted from Volume 3 of the

final EIS: all of the third sentence in the first paragraph and the second paragraph in its entirety of Response 53 on page 181, and the first sentence of Response 55 on page 182.

6. As a result of internal review, cultural resource management priority areas (MPAs) have been deleted from the RMP. The reason for this is that federal regulations already require that priority management consideration be given to cultural resources on all land use actions authorized or proposed by BLM (36 CFR VIII 800); therefore, MPAs for cultural resources are redundant and unnecessary. Significant cultural resource sites which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places are included in Mandatory Protection Area MPAs.

These modifications are a result of protests the BLM received on the proposed plan, refined guidance received on ACECs from BLM's Washington Office, and internal review. Final plan decisions, terms, and conditions are described in detail in Chapter 2 of the resource management plan.

### Alternatives

Five land use alternatives were developed and analyzed based upon the issues and criteria established at the outset and followed throughout this planning process: the Current Management (No Action) Alternative, the Wildlife Alternative, the Oil and Gas Alternative, the Oil Shale Alternative, and the Preferred Alternative (Proposed Plan).

The Current Management Alternative maintained present management directions to resolve issues under existing decisions and the Management Framework Plan currently in effect. This was the No Action Alternative required by NEPA.

The Wildlife Alternative emphasized the management and use of the public lands for the benefit of wildlife and other renewable resources. Significant surface disturbing activities would be discouraged with management actions directed toward maintaining or enhancing wildlife habitat and other related resource values. Although this alternative was the environmentally preferable alternative, it did not resolve all of the planning issues or balance all land uses and resource values to the greatest benefit of all the public; therefore, it was not BLM's preferred plan.



## RECORD OF DECISION

The Oil and Gas Alternative placed management emphasis on planning and providing for oil and gas development and transportation. In addition, management priority was directed toward providing access to the public lands for other resource values including forest products, off-road vehicle use, and major linear rights-of-way.

The Oil Shale Alternative placed management emphasis on the development, production, and transportation of oil shale and other associated minerals. Management priority would be directed toward making lands available for commercial oil shale leasing by private industry as demand and economics dictate. Minimum management of renewable resources would generally occur under this alternative.

The Proposed Resource Management Plan (Preferred Alternative) achieves the combination of management options that is the most acceptable resolution of the planning issues identified during the planning process. It attempts to balance all land uses and resource values and was developed only after considering the impacts to all management options and the long-term public interest and benefits of implementation.

Members of the public recommended that a National Wildlife Refuge be established for the Piceance Basin mule deer herd. This was determined to be unnecessary and contrary to BLM's commitment to multiple-use management of the public lands. Similarly, a recommendation that all critical wildlife winter range be designated as an ACEC was not analyzed in detail, but was rejected as not implementable within the management guidelines or intent of the ACEC program.

Following public review of the Draft Piceance Basin RMP/EIS, a "Citizens' Alternative" was proposed by numerous environmental groups. This proposed alternative incorporated concepts from all of the five alternatives that were analyzed in detail in the draft, plus additional ideas. It was determined that this alternative was qualitatively within the scope of the five alternatives developed and analyzed in the RMP and therefore did not warrant further analysis. All new points or suggestions within the proposed "Citizens' Alternative" were considered and addressed in Volume 3 of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

### Management Considerations

At the outset of the planning process, issues were identified by the public and the BLM for resolution in the plan. The most critical issues centered around oil shale development and its potential impacts. Other issues included conflicts with oil and gas leasing, management of wildlife, interim management of the pending oil shale mining claims, hydrologic impacts and water resource management, livestock grazing and wild horse management, designation and protection of rare plant values, impacts to air quality

and socioeconomics from mineral development, the need for utility corridors, and management for other lands and realty actions, as well as other concerns.

These issues were initially incorporated into the development of four multiple-use alternatives. Each alternative proposed different solutions to these issues and concerns. The potential impacts, to the environment and nearby communities, of implementing each alternative were examined and presented to BLM management. Then, based on this analysis, BLM policy and goals, and the responsiveness of each alternative to the issues, a Preferred Alternative was developed and the environmental consequences of that alternative were predicted.

The Preferred Alternative (Proposed Plan) is the combination of management options that best resolve all of the issues identified during the planning process. It attempts to balance all land uses and resource values by considering the impacts of all management options and the long-term public interest and benefits of implementing the alternative.

### Mitigation

The RMP has been designed to avoid or minimize environmental harm where practicable. Specific mitigative measures are described in Chapter 2 of the attached RMP.

### Monitoring

A monitoring program has been developed for the plan that includes monitoring and evaluation standards for implementing the plan and determining whether mitigative measures are satisfactory. The monitoring program is described by resource in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, of the RMP.

### Public Involvement

The views of the public have been sought throughout the planning and decisionmaking process. Public participation in the process is summarized in Chapter 1, Section 1.9, of the RMP.



## Protests

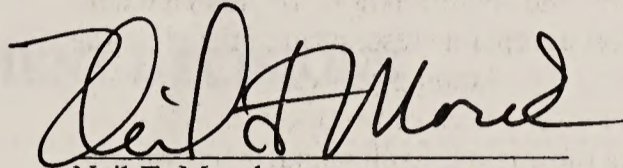
BLM received ten protests to the plan. These protests involved concerns about socioeconomic impact mitigation, oil shale land exchange decisions, protection and designation of rare plant values, hydrology impacts, environmental impact statement alternatives, and planning criteria. All protests were resolved. For further clarification, please see Chapter 1, Section 1.9, of the attached RMP.

## Consistency

This plan is consistent with the plans, programs, and policies of other federal agencies and of state and local governments.

## Public Availability of This Document

Additional copies of the Piceance Basin RMP are available on request at the White River Resource Area office, 73544 Highway 64 (PO Box 928), Meeker, Colorado 81641, Telephone (303) 878-3601. Copies may also be obtained from the Craig District office, 455 Emerson St, Craig, Colorado 81625 and the Colorado State office, 2850 Youngfield St, Lakewood, Colorado 80215.



Neil F. Morck  
Colorado State Director

3-13-87

Date







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# CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE AND NEED

## 1.1 Introduction

This resource management plan (RMP) sets forth the levels and decisions, terms, and conditions for grazing and directing other management actions in the Pleasant River Planning Area of the White River National Area. All land and activities in the planning area, including public land grazing rights, are subject to the decisions, terms, and conditions in this RMP. The RMP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The plan describes the land resources and grazing and other management actions in the planning area. It also describes the management actions that will be taken to protect and enhance the land resources and grazing and other management actions in the planning area.

The RMP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

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## 1.2 Purpose and Need

In May 1983, the Colorado State Planning Board advised that a RMP be prepared for the Pleasant River Planning Area of the White River National Area. The purpose of the RMP is to provide a framework for the management of the land resources and grazing and other management actions in the planning area. The RMP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

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# CHAPTER ONE PURPOSE AND NEED

## 1.3 Description of the Planning Area

The Pleasant River Planning Area is located in the White River National Area, Colorado. It is bounded by the Pleasant River to the north, the White River to the south, and the National Forest boundary to the east and west. The planning area contains approximately 100,000 acres of land, including public land grazing rights and other management actions.

The RMP is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. It is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

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# CHAPTER 1.

## PURPOSE AND NEED

### 1.1 Introduction

This resource management plan (RMP) sets forth the land-use decisions, terms, and conditions for guiding and directing future management actions in the Piceance Basin Planning Area of the White River Resource Area. All uses and activities in the planning area, excluding prior valid existing rights, must conform with the decisions, terms, and conditions as described herein. The plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The plan describes, generally, how the planning area will be managed in terms of overall objectives, planned management actions, rationale, implementation needs/priorities, monitoring, and support for each resource (Chapter 2).

The RMP map in the back of this document shows the geographic location of the various management priority areas (MPAs) that make up the Piceance Basin Planning Area. Chapter 2, Section 2.3, defines the MPAs shown on the RMP map and describes how management of other resources will be integrated with the priority use described for each geographic area. MPA map depictions and MPA decisions pertain only to those rights on the lands for which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has administrative authority (i.e., surface ownership, subsurface minerals ownership, or both).

This document does not present information on the existing environment or environmental consequences of the decisions. This information was previously presented in the draft and final environmental impact statements (EISs) (Volumes 1 and 3), which may be obtained by contacting the White River Resource Area office.

### 1.2 Purpose and Need

In May 1982, the Colorado State Director, BLM, directed that a RMP be prepared for the Piceance Basin Planning Area of the White River Resource Area. The original intent of this directive was to incorporate the necessary land-use planning decisions for a long-term, commercial oil shale leasing program within the context of a broad, multiple-use plan, thereby allowing leasing of oil shale tracts immediately upon completion and approval of the plan.

However, in July 1983, the BLM State Director made a decision to change the scope of the RMP so that only management priority areas would be described; oil shale lease tracts were not to be delineated until after completion of the RMP.

This plan provides the framework upon which future management decisions will be based. It is not intended to make specific program decisions for individual resource elements, but rather to provide the overall multiple-use objectives and management direction for the planning area. This framework for future management is established by determining which resources will be given management emphasis in the various parts, or management priority areas, of the planning area. Management direction for each management priority area allows for other resources to be developed or protected in that area following the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.

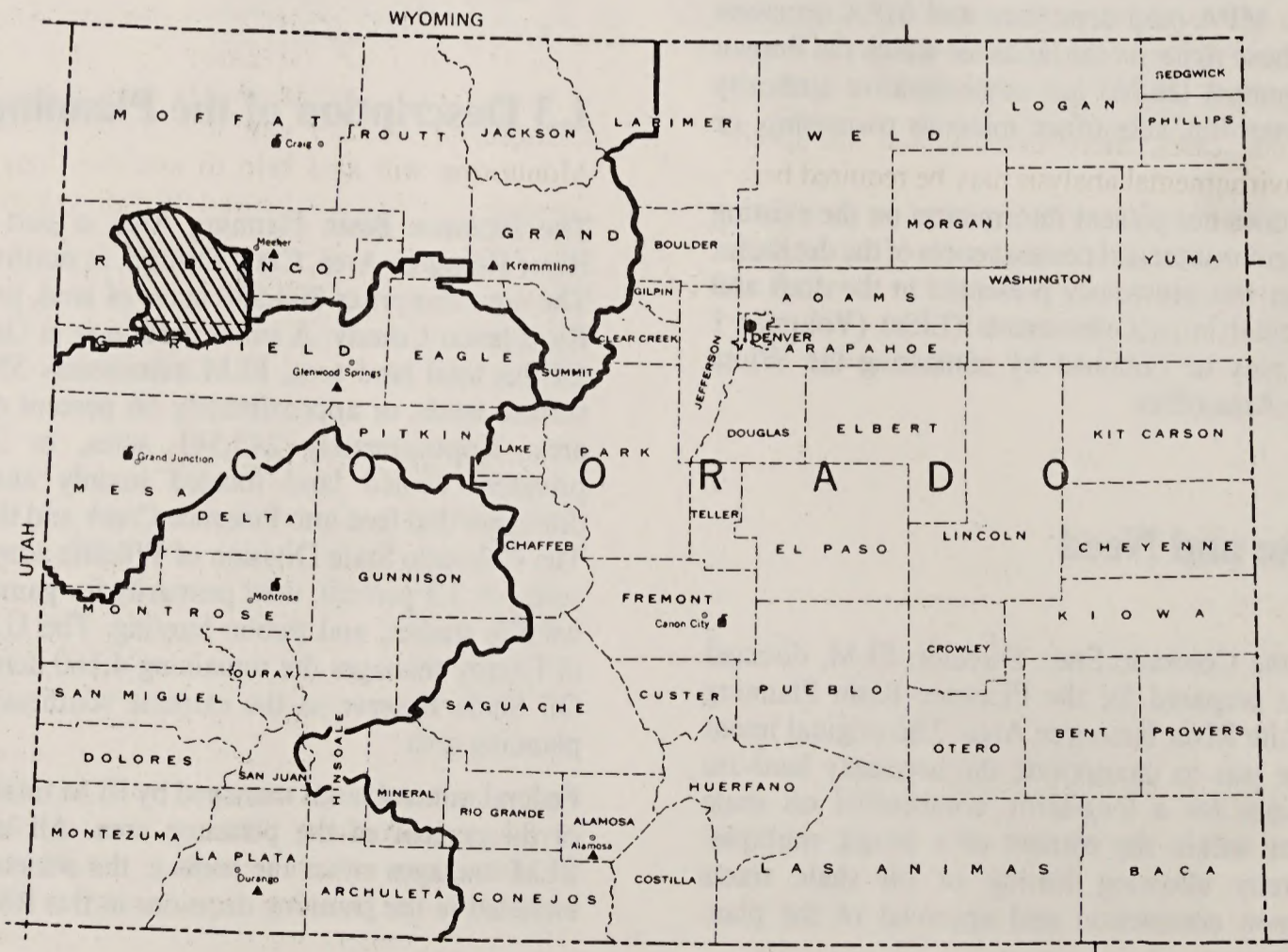
Without this plan, any proposed development or protection of resources in the planning area would have to be examined on a case-by-case basis, with each action being weighed against all the other possible uses for the area and its effect on all other resources. This "piecemeal" approach would not provide a comprehensive or cumulative analysis of the effects of taking these various individual actions.

### 1.3 Description of the Planning Area

The Piceance Basin Planning Area is part of the White River Resource Area, Craig District, in northwest Colorado. The area comprises 804,580 acres of land, primarily within Rio Blanco County. A small portion is in Garfield County. Of this total land area, BLM administers 530,109 acres of surface lands, or approximately 66 percent of the planning area. Approximately 243,541 acres, or 30 percent, is privately owned land located mainly along the major drainages that feed into Piceance Creek and the White River. The Colorado State Division of Wildlife administers 26,770 acres, or 3.3 percent, used primarily for game management, wildlife studies, and public hunting. The U.S. Department of Energy manages the remaining 4,160 acres of the Naval Oil Shale Reserve in the extreme southeast corner of the planning area.

Federal mineral lands managed by BLM total 674,370 acres, or 84 percent of the planning area. All lands for which BLM manages either the surface, the minerals, or both are included in the planning decisions in this RMP.





# PICEANCE BASIN PLANNING AREA

Map 1-A



The Piceance Basin Planning Area is bounded by the White River to the north; state highway 13 to the east; the Roan Plateau and BLM's Grand Junction District to the south; and the Cathedral Bluffs to the west. Map 1-A shows the location and boundaries of the planning area.

## 1.4 Implementation

All future resource management authorizations and actions, including budget proposals, will conform to or, at a minimum, not conflict with the plan. All operations and activities under existing permits, contracts, cooperative agreements, or other instruments for occupancy and use will be modified, if necessary, to conform with this plan within a reasonable period of time, subject to valid existing rights.

This plan does not repeal valid existing rights on public lands. Valid existing rights are those claims or rights to public land that take precedence over the actions in this plan. Valid existing rights may be held by other federal agencies or by private individuals or companies. Valid existing rights may also pertain to other uses (authorizations) such as oil and gas leases, rights-of-way, and water rights. Such authorizations will be reviewed and brought into conformance with the plan, as necessary, prior to renewal or reissuance.

Decisions in this plan will be implemented over a period of years. In some cases, more detailed and site-specific planning and environmental analysis may be required before an action can be taken. The EIS prepared in association with this plan will be used as a base and incorporated by reference into any additional site or program specific environmental analyses. Requirements for additional planning and analyses are incorporated into the decisions found in Chapter 2.

Priorities have been established for those decisions that cannot be implemented immediately. These priorities are intended to guide the order of implementation. They link the planned actions in the RMP with the budget process. Priorities for each program will be reviewed annually to help develop the budget for the coming year. The priorities may be revised, based on new administrative policies, new Departmental directions, or new Bureau goals. The priorities for implementation of decisions are presented both by resource and by overall planning area in Chapter 2.

Any person adversely affected by a specific action being proposed to implement any portion of this plan may appeal such action, pursuant to 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4.400, at the time the action is proposed for implementation.

## 1.5 Mitigation, Monitoring, and Evaluation

The RMP incorporates measures for mitigating undesirable environmental effects. Committed mitigative measures are all those stipulations, restrictions, and requirements that will be imposed on activities on the public lands to protect environmental, socioeconomic, or other resource values. They are the mitigative measures that BLM or other agencies are committed to enforcing in managing the public lands. Uncommitted mitigative measures are those methods by which residual impacts could be lessened or eliminated but that are outside of BLM's authority to enforce. These measures are listed in Chapter IV, Volume 1 of the Draft RMP/EIS. Committed mitigative measures are identified in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, of this document under respective resource decisions, as pertinent, and will be applied during implementation of the RMP. In most cases, additional mitigation will be applied during the activity planning stage when subsequent site-specific plans/analyses are prepared.

The effects of implementing the Piceance Basin RMP will be monitored and evaluated on a periodic basis to assure that the desired results are being achieved. Individual resources will be monitored, as explained in Chapter 2 of this document. Monitoring will determine whether actions are consistent with current policy, whether original assumptions were correctly applied and impacts correctly predicted, whether mitigative measures are satisfactory, whether conditions or circumstances have significantly changed, or whether new data is significant to the plan. Monitoring will also help to establish long-term use and resource condition trends and provide valuable information for future planning. The level of monitoring, as with all other BLM actions, is dependent on receiving adequate funding.

## 1.6 Changing the Plan

The plan may be changed, if necessary, through amendment. Monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, and new or revised policies will be evaluated to determine if there is a need for an amendment. Any change in circumstances or conditions that affect the scope, terms, or conditions of the plan may warrant an amendment. In all cases, a proposed action that does not conform with the plan and warrants further consideration before a plan revision is scheduled would require an amendment. Generally an amendment is site-specific or involves only one or two planning issues. The amendment process is identical to the resource



## CHAPTER 1

management planning process, though the scope of information, analysis, and documentation is more limited.

A plan revision, when necessary, involves the preparation of a new RMP for the entire planning area. This would occur when the plan becomes outdated or otherwise obsolete.

The public and other agencies will be included in the amendment and revision processes.

### 1.7 Maintaining the Plan

This plan will be maintained as necessary to reflect minor changes in data. Maintenance will be limited to refining or documenting a previously approved decision. It shall not expand the scope of resource uses or restrictions or change the terms, conditions, and decisions of the plan. Maintenance will be documented in supporting records. Maintenance changes will be kept on record in the White River Resource Area Office. Formal public involvement will not be necessary to maintain the plan.

### 1.8 Relationship to Other BLM Planning Levels and Studies

Development of a RMP occurs within the framework of the BLM planning system. The planning system is subdivided into three distinct tiers for operational purposes: policy planning, land use planning, and activities or program-specific planning. The Council on Environmental Quality regulations provided for tiering to aid compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500-1508). This plan satisfies the requirements for the land-use tier of planning.

Incorporation by reference is the procedure of adopting an existing document or specified portion as an integral part of a new document, where the existing document provides partial or full analysis for a resource issue, action, or situation. At the beginning of this RMP process, recently completed program-specific planning and environmental analysis documents were evaluated for inclusion in the RMP (40 CFR 1502.21). These documents had been completed for management of grazing, wilderness, coal, and oil and gas. BLM determined that complete reanalysis or updating was unnecessary for these resources. Therefore, the analyses in these existing documents, relevant to the Piceance Basin Planning Area, were incorporated by reference into the RMP. All of these resource-specific planning and environmental

analysis documents were summarized on pages 19 and 20 of the draft EIS (Volume 1).

### 1.9 Public Involvement and Intergovernmental/Interagency Coordination

Public participation and consultation was encouraged and sought throughout the development of this plan. The planning process was officially initiated through a public notice in the July 22, 1982, *Federal Register*. This notice invited the general public as well as other federal, state, and local government agencies to identify major planning issues and to submit other comments or concerns regarding the planning effort to the BLM.

Public meetings were held in Denver, Colorado, on August 24, 1982; Meeker, Colorado, on August 25, 1982; and Grand Junction, Colorado, on August 26, 1982, to focus attention on the planning issues. Since these initial scoping meetings, the public has been involved throughout the development of the RMP by way of numerous workshops, public meetings, newsletters, and *Federal Register* notices.

Coordination and/or consultation with other federal agencies, state and local governments, and various advisory groups has occurred throughout the planning process. These include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- State of Colorado
- Rio Blanco and Garfield Counties
- Regional Oil Shale Team
- Western Utility Group

The draft RMP/EIS was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on April 16, 1984. The notice of availability and a public meeting announcement were published on April 27, 1984, in the *Federal Register*. The public was provided 92 days from this date, to July 27, 1984, to comment on the draft RMP/EIS. Formal meetings were held in Meeker, Colorado, on May 15, 1984; Grand Junction, Colorado, on May 17, 1984; Lakewood, Colorado, on May 22, 1984; and Glenwood Springs, Colorado, on May 24, 1984. Over 600 specific comments from 81 letters and 4 public meeting transcripts were received on the draft EIS. All substantive comments were considered and responses were prepared and published in the final EIS (Volume 3).

The notice of availability of the proposed RMP/final EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 1, 1985. The notice announced a 30-day protest period from this date.



## Protests

BLM received ten protests to the plan. These protests involved concerns about socioeconomic impact mitigation, oil shale land exchange decisions, protection and designation of rare plant values, hydrology impacts, environmental impact statement alternatives, and planning criteria. All protests were resolved. As a result of protest resolution, the proposed plan was approved with some changes. The changes are described below.

1. Two protests were received from local governmental entities on the deletion in the proposed RMP of a provision contained in the draft requiring future oil shale lessees and "the affected governments" to develop a mutually agreeable socioeconomic impact mitigation plan at the time the lessee submits a detailed development plan to the BLM. In order to resolve this concern, the following stipulation is incorporated into the plan:

"The lessee shall comply with all state and local laws governing any class of activity undertaken on the lease in the exercise of lease rights, including permits and license laws, except that such laws apply only to the extent they do not impermissibly conflict with the achievement of a congressionally approved use of federal lands."

2. As a result of protests on land exchange decisions in the proposed RMP, the plan now contains the following statement: "The Secretary of the Interior has the discretion to allow exchanged or leased oil shale research lands to be redelineated or expanded to a commercial-sized lease at a later date should improved multiminerall resource recovery technology be proven." In addition, the following statements have been deleted from Volume 3: All of the third sentence in the first paragraph and the second paragraph in its entirety of Response 53 on page 181, and the first sentence of Response 55 on page 182.
3. Five protests were received on the proposed RMP/final EIS that disagreed with the decisions regarding areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC) and protection of important plant resources in the Piceance Basin. Based on refined guidance and direction received from BLM's Washington Office and in consideration of the protests, a reanalysis of all 20 of the areas identified by The Nature Conservancy for possible designation as ACECs was completed. Following the reanalysis, the public was notified of the proposed ACEC decisions through, 1) publication of a notice in the *Federal Register*, 2) the mailing of an information bulletin, and 3) a media news release. A 60-day public comment period was held and ten individual comment letters were received. Although all substantive

comments were considered and responded to, the proposed decisions were not changed. As a result of the reanalysis, the following decisions are now contained in the plan:

- a. Five areas are designated as ACECs (two of the initially identified areas are combined into one ACEC). The five are located in Rio Blanco County, total 6,635 acres, and include Deer Gulch, Dudley Bluffs, Lower Greasewood Creek, South Cathedral Bluffs, and Yanks Gulch/Upper Greasewood Creek.
- b. The Soldier Creek area will be designated as an ACEC if the State of Colorado designates its adjoining acreage.
- c. The School Gulch area will be designated as an ACEC if ongoing monitoring indicates it is necessary.
- d. Twelve initially identified areas will not be designated as ACECs.

Detailed information on the above decisions is contained in Chapter 2.

## 1.10 Administrative Actions

Various types of administrative actions will require special attention beyond the scope of this plan. Administrative actions are the day-to-day transactions required to serve the public in the issuance of permits for fuelwood, sawtimber, Christmas trees, and commercial recreation activities; lands actions, including issuance of grants, lessees, permits, and resolution of trespass; facility maintenance; law enforcement; enforcement and monitoring of permit stipulations; cadastral surveys to determine legal land ownership; and engineering support to assist in mapping, designing, and implementing projects. These and other administrative actions will be conducted at the resource area, district, or state offices. The degree to which these actions are carried out will be based on BLM policy, available personnel, and funding levels.















# CHAPTER 2.

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the decisions that will guide future management of the publicly-owned resources in the Piceance Basin Planning Area of the White River Resource Area. The decisions are described in two major sections—Resource Use Decisions and Management Priority Area Decisions. The first section describes management of individual resources and the second section describes management of geographic areas called Management Priority Areas (MPAs). The MPAs are shown on the Resource Management Plan (RMP) map at the back of this document.

The decisions are organized into two sections to facilitate use of the plan. If a reader is interested in management of a particular resource in the Piceance Basin, he or she can turn to the first section, "Resource Use Decisions," and can find out how that resource will be managed throughout the planning area. If, on the other hand, a reader is primarily interested in a particular geographic area, he or she can turn to the second section, "Management Priority Area Decisions," and can find out what resource uses will be allowed in that area and under what terms and conditions.

Although there is some overlap between these two sections, neither is designed to stand on its own as a distinct and complete description of the resource management decisions that have been approved. These sections are interrelated and interdependent and they must be viewed together in order to get a complete, accurate picture of the management direction for the Piceance Basin Planning Area.

Overall priorities for implementation of major decisions in the Piceance Basin RMP are based on numerous criteria and considerations that include: decisions made in previous activity planning documents (i.e., Proposed Grazing Management Program for the White River Resource Area, Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - Volumes 1 and 2 and as approved in the subsequent Rangeland Program Summary; White River Resource Area Herd Management Area Plan; Piceance Basin Habitat Management Plan; White River Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella Environmental Assessment (EA)); current and projected resource needs and demands; potential impacts to important resource values; the Bureau's management direction, emphasis, and funding. Based on these criteria and considerations, the following major decisions need to be implemented in the first 5 years following approval of the RMP:

1. Update the Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA in Fiscal Year (FY) 88.
2. Complete the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Implementation Plan in FY 88.
3. Develop one Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Activity Plan per year beginning with South Cathedral Bluffs ACEC in FY 88, followed by Dudley Bluffs ACEC, Deer Gulch ACEC, Yanks Gulch/Upper Greasewood Creek ACEC, and Lower Greasewood Creek ACEC. Continue existing, and establish additional monitoring should data or activity plans indicate a need.
4. Develop and begin implementation of two allotment management plans (AMPs) per year. Continue implementation of existing AMPs and monitoring on all intensive management allotments.
5. Continue implementation and monitoring of the White River Resource Area Wild Horse Herd Management Area Plan.
6. Continue implementation and monitoring of the Piceance Basin Habitat Management Plan. Monitor effectiveness of mitigation applied to other resource activities.
7. Develop and implement plans for riparian areas.
8. Develop a Recreation Area Management Plan for the Piceance Basin Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), beginning with the Cow Creek Unit in FY 89, followed by the Spring Creek Unit, the Dry Fork Unit, and the Cathedral Bluffs Unit.
9. Complete a new transportation map.
10. Develop and implement a road signing program.
11. Develop the initial baseline to provide a realistic projection of the present carrying capacity situation so as to be in a position to implement the carrying capacity concept should major development of mineral resources in the Piceance Basin become active.
12. Leasing of land for oil shale and/or multimineral development for research purposes or commercial development will be handled on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to established carrying capacity criteria.

### 2.2 Resource Use Decisions

This section describes management decisions for each resource in the Piceance Basin in terms of:



## CHAPTER 2

- planned actions
- rationale for the planned actions
- how the planned actions will be implemented and in what order
- monitoring to determine effectiveness of planned actions
- support needed to implement the planned actions

### 2.2.1 Air Resource Management

#### 2.2.1.1 Objectives

- Minimize air quality degradation through legal compliance, monitoring, analysis, and impact mitigation.
- Implement increased air resource “budgeting” and maintain air quality modeling to ensure balanced utilization of multiple resources with minimal impacts.
- Support other resource programs by providing basic climatic data and performing predictive modeling.

#### 2.2.1.2 Planned Actions

- Monitor existing conditions to determine changes associated with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or other agency activities.
- Develop site-specific mitigative measures and incorporate them into project proposals, as determined necessary on a case-by-case basis, to reduce potential impacts to the air resource and to assure compliance with applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and implementation plans. Air resource “budgeting” will be applied to all land uses on federal lands that would require air-quality modeling/permitting and would consume air-quality increments.

#### 2.2.1.3 Rationale

Existing air quality in the planning area is generally good, although anticipated industrial development will cause deterioration. This action will allow BLM to minimize air quality degradation and also allow for balanced industrial growth within the parameters of applicable federal, state, and local air-quality laws and regulations.

#### 2.2.1.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Air resource budgeting will require modeling analysis of each proposed oil shale lease tract and other major mineral development projects within the Piceance Basin to determine how the location of each tract or project will contribute to existing pollutant concentrations. If potential lease tracts or major projects are located within areas of poor dispersion potential, then more of the available air-quality increments will be expected to be consumed. By locating major projects outside of poor dispersion areas, more of the available air-

quality increments will be available for other projects. In essence, budgeting will maximize the availability of the air resource for future uses and minimize potential impacts.

Priority 1. Evaluate project proposals and other land-use applications, including BLM initiated actions, for potential air quality impacts. Develop and apply site-specific mitigative measures, as deemed necessary, on a case-by-case basis to reduce potential impacts. Apply air resource “budgeting” to all land uses on federal lands that require air-quality modeling and that are expected to consume air-quality increments.

Priority 2. Continue to monitor existing conditions to evaluate air quality management effectiveness and trends.

#### 2.2.1.5 Monitoring

Maintain ongoing air-quality monitoring programs. Ensure that new projects which affect federal lands are modeled for air-quality impacts and that the modeling effort takes into account the existing (baseline) level of development on air resources.

#### 2.2.1.6 Support

Air resource management technical support is required from the state office air resource specialist and from other specialists in the Colorado Department of Health - Air Pollution Control Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region VIII, the Forest Service - Region II, and the National Park Service - Rocky Mountain Region. Each of these other agencies have unique responsibilities under the Clean Air Act.

### 2.2.2 Oil Shale

#### 2.2.2.1 Objectives

- Provide for prudent, planned future leasing and development of the oil shale resource within the planning area.
- Base future tract delineations and leasing primarily upon demand and the progress and success of existing prototype tracts.
- Limit future leasing and development to designated oil shale and other compatible management priority areas (MPAs).
- Implement a sequential lease offering process whereby critical carrying capacities are not exceeded.



**2.2.2.2 Planned Actions**

- Allow for potential future open pit oil shale leasing (in addition to Tract C-a and proposed extension) on approximately 27,303 acres within the open pit oil shale MPA so as not to interfere with the potential C-a migrating pit and when assured that off-site disposal needs can legally be met (Map 2-A). Careful consideration will be given to potential conflicts with other developments, to the oil and gas and oil shale resource values that might be foregone by open pit mining or off-site spent shale disposal, to the cumulative environmental impacts of more than one open pit in such close proximity, and to various other environmental concerns and constraints.
- Allow for future oil shale leasing for underground mining on approximately 207,295 acres within the underground oil shale MPA and other compatible MPAs (Map 2-A). The location and configuration of any specific future leases within the MPA will be determined by formal expressions of interest from industry.
- Reserve the multimineral oil shale zone, a 76,595-acre area containing the thickest, richest oil shale deposits in the basin, from future commercial leasing (Map 2-B) until technology has proven improved recovery rates for oil shale and associated minerals, as determined by the BLM State Director. The only exception to this limit are Prototype Tracts C-11 and C-18, which have already been examined on a site-specific basis and are available for future leasing. In addition, the Secretary of the Interior has the authority to make available noncommercial research tracts in the multimineral zone in an effort to prove the success of multimineral recovery technology.
- Oil shale leasing is excluded from the Piceance Dome area east of Piceance Creek because of the rich oil and gas deposits in the area and the unfavorable geologic setting for oil shale development.
- Future oil shale lease offerings will be scheduled based on (1) demand, and (2) progress and success of existing federal leases and private oil shale projects in the region. Demand for speculative purposes will not be included in this determination. If there is a real demand and if it is determined that existing projects are developing diligently, a sequential lease offering process will be followed whereby critical environmental and socioeconomic carrying capacities are not exceeded.
- The carrying capacity concept will be applied to future oil shale leasing and development within the planning area. Critical carrying capacities (thresholds) are identified for air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, and population growth to nearby communities and are summarized in Table 2-A. Real impacts will be continuously monitored as development occurs so as not to allow additional oil shale leasing if thresholds may be exceeded. A project exceeding any one of the

thresholds will not be leased or approved as proposed. Individual thresholds are not ranked and do not have priority over each other. Trade-offs between thresholds will not be allowed.

- Oil shale research tracts will be analyzed based upon the merits of the proposed technology and the availability of alternate private lands.
- Mitigative measures will be applied by BLM in the form of standard and special stipulations to minimize projected environmental and socioeconomic impacts from oil shale resource development. Standard stipulations will be applied at the leasing stage and will eventually come from the Programmatic Oil Shale Leasing Program. The standard stipulations will be built on the foundation established by the Prototype Oil Shale Program and all associated environmental and sociological research efforts. Special stipulations will be applied by BLM at the Detailed Development Plan stage of analysis, as necessary, to minimize potential impacts of development. The following socioeconomic impact mitigative stipulation will be incorporated into any future oil shale leases: “The lessee shall comply with all state and local laws governing any class of activity undertaken on the lease in the exercise of lease rights, including permits and license laws, except that such laws apply only to the extent they do not impermissibly conflict with the achievement of a congressionally approved use of federal lands.”

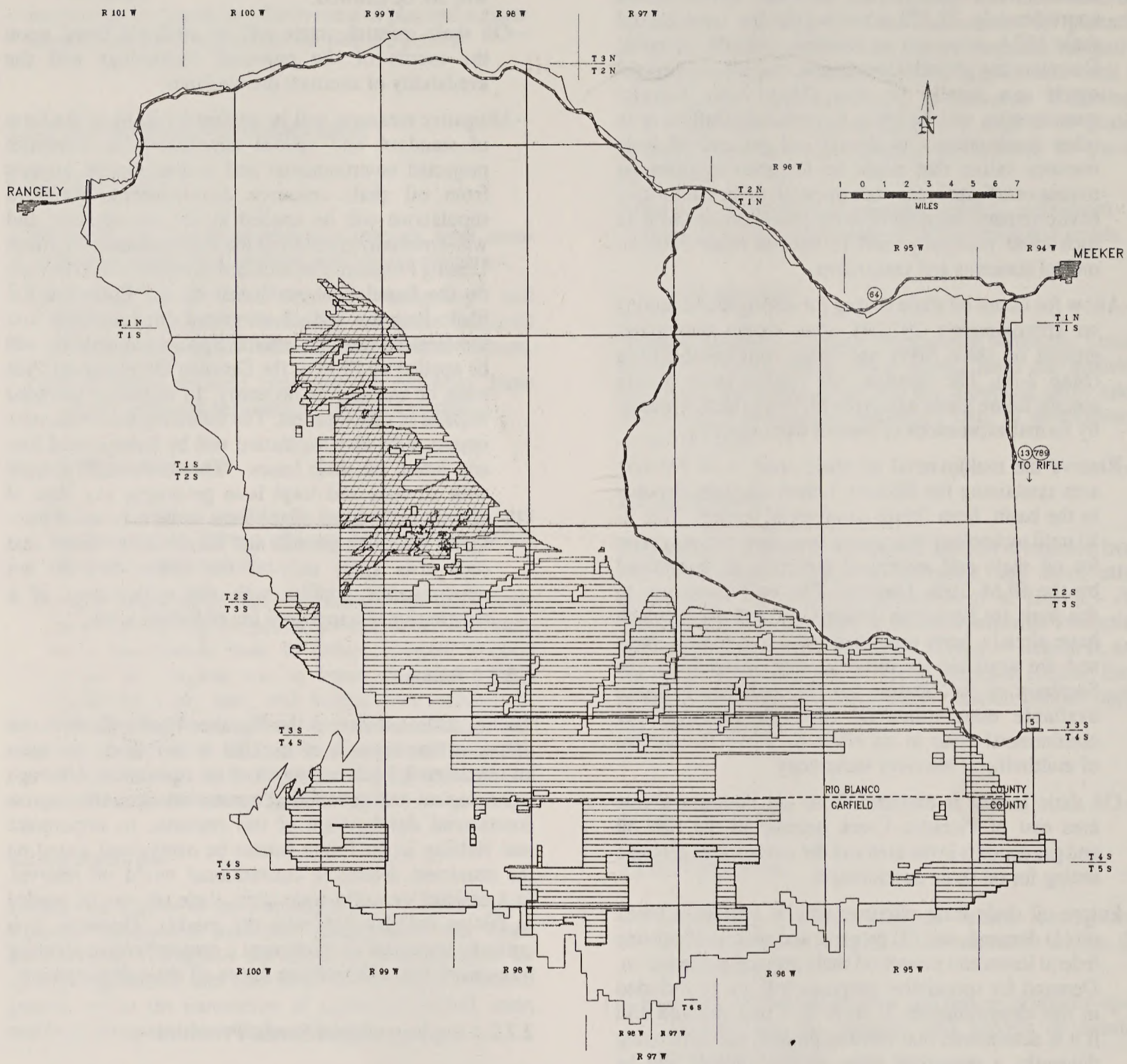
**2.2.2.3 Rationale**



The oil shale resource in the Piceance Basin, which is one of the richest deposits of its kind in the world, contains an estimated 1.2 trillion barrels of oil equivalent. Although technological and economical constraints currently depress commercial development of this resource, its importance and viability in the future cannot be overlooked, based on the imminent decline in conventional world oil reserves. In a national or world-wide crisis, shale oil may be needed as fast as industry can enter the market. Therefore, it is critically important to implement a comprehensive planning framework that will facilitate future oil shale development.

**2.2.2.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities**

Although areas are identified as being available for future underground or open pit oil shale leasing, additional planning and environmental analysis will be required before offering any lands for lease. The initial location and configuration of any potential leases will be determined based on analysis of formal expressions of interest from industry. BLM will only seek expressions of interest if there is a real demand for oil shale (not for speculative purposes) and if existing federal oil shale lease tracts and private oil shale projects in the region are developing diligently.



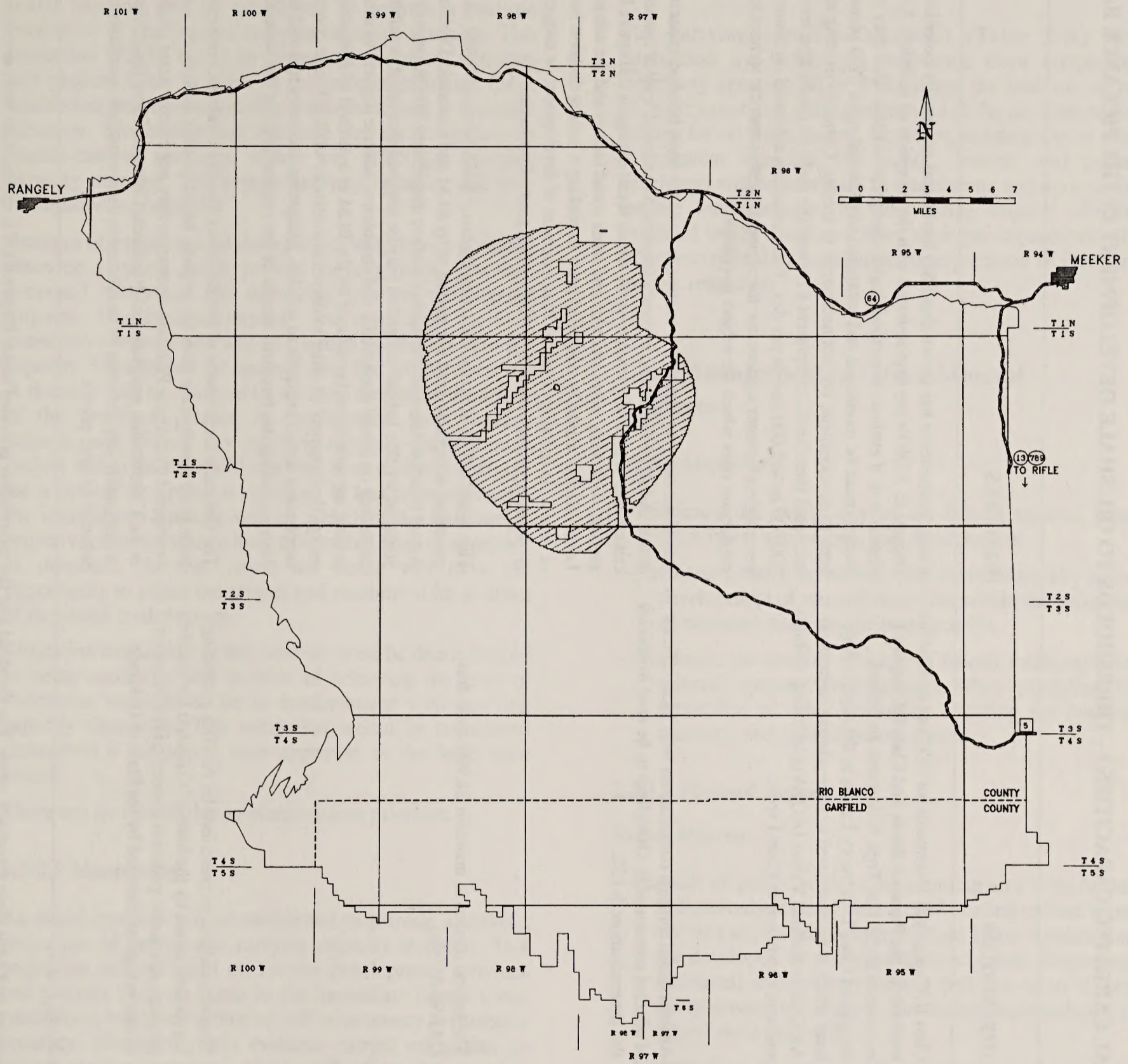



 OPEN PIT  
 UNDERGROUND

## LANDS POTENTIALLY AVAILABLE FOR OIL SHALE LEASING

Map 2-A





 MULTI MINERAL

## MULTIMINERAL OIL SHALE ZONE



TABLE 2-A

SUMMARY OF CRITICAL CARRYING CAPACITIES<sup>1</sup> - THRESHOLDS TO OIL SHALE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PICEANCE BASIN

RESOURCE	MEASUREMENT	THRESHOLDS	REMARKS
Air Quality	Ambient concentrations of pollutants in the air as determined by ambient monitoring and dispersion modeling.	Class II/Category II increments for SO <sub>2</sub> and particulates available in the Piceance Basin, and Class I/Category I increments in the Flat Tops Wilderness and other designated Class I/Category I areas in the region. Any level which is demonstrated to have adverse impacts on Air Quality Related Values (AQRVs) including visibility and acid deposition in Class I areas.	Current experience has shown that PSD increments are usually exceeded before adverse impacts to AQRVs are demonstrated with the exception of visibility. As technology improves or if evaluation methodologies change, production rates may increase. Actual impacts must be monitored and compared to predicted rates. PSD permits act as effective limit to development, but not necessarily to leasing. Currently existing studies have estimated these limits to represent a cumulative shale oil production level for Piceance of 300,000 to 400,000 barrels per day. These estimates are based on assumptions of the general development scenario for the region as well as specific technologies and project production rates which are subject to change.
Social/Economic	Annual growth rate of affected communities.	As determined through consultations with local officials of affected communities. Guidelines to be used in making this determination: 5-15%.	Economic carrying capacity is relative to local tax base, bonding capacity, federal and state grants-in-aid, and up-front corporate impacts. Most social science researchers place the critical rate of annual growth beyond which social change is disruptive between 5 and 15 percent, depending upon attitudes and other social factors and the adequacy of mitigations. Local officials would be consulted prior to making a leasing decision based on social and/or economic carrying capacity. Postponement of development or staggered leasing would be possible alternatives if such overloading seemed probable.
Wildlife	Habitat carrying capacity to support wintering mule deer on public land in the Piceance Basin.	The habitat needed to maintain 24,900 mule deer (24,650 AUMs).	This figure is 83% of actual wintering Piceance Basin herd of 30,000 on all lands, the minimum acceptable herd size agreed to by BLM and Colorado Division of Wildlife. Actual location, size and duration of surface disturbance affects amount of leasing allowed. Stringent wildlife habitat mitigation may be imposed instead of prohibition of leasing depending on actual site-specific and cumulative adverse impacts to mule deer. Livestock grazing use would not be reduced by the BLM as a method of mitigating the impacts of energy development in order to decrease livestock/wildlife forage competition or to supplement forage available to wildlife. Mitigation necessary to avoid development impacts from exceeding this threshold would be the responsibility of the mineral lessee, not BLM.
Water Quality	Discharge water quality of individual projects.	Stream standards as prescribed by NPDES permitting regulations issued by the State of Colorado for specific projects. Allowable pollutant concentrations based on stream ratings as classified by the State of Colorado.	The Colorado Department of Health-Water Quality Control Commission issues NPDES permits on case-by-case basis for projects, based on their analysis on water quality of anticipated discharges. Pollutant discharges may not exceed water quality limits established in the Classification and Numeric Standards, Colorado River Basin. Actual cumulative water quality impacts must be monitored to assure analysis is sufficient to determine whether to issue permit.

<sup>1</sup> See text for definition of critical carrying capacity and what these thresholds mean. The threshold and the information provided under REMARKS is summarized from discussions included under the appropriate heading for each resource in the Draft RMP/EIS, Volume I, Chapter IV, Environmental Consequences.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

In order to implement the carrying capacity concept, an initial baseline will be established to provide a realistic projection of the present carrying capacity situation. This projection will be based on current development activities and projects likely to occur in the immediate future. Once established, baseline monitoring will be necessary to maintain accuracy. Monitoring will evaluate current mitigation or impact-causing activities, which will affect the carrying capacity situation. The present carrying capacity will then be adjusted accordingly.

Analysis of a proposed oil shale project will identify potential resource impacts from project development, evaluate proposed mitigation, and determine resultant unmitigated impacts. Unmitigated impacts are considered part of cumulative impacts and will be counted against the carrying capacity. Impacts will be assessed over the project duration. A decision will be made as to whether unmitigated impacts of the proposed project, in combination with baseline impacts, will exceed any carrying capacity thresholds. A project within the threshold can then be completely analyzed for a leasing or approval decision. If leased or approved, the unmitigated impacts will be added to the baseline. A project exceeding the threshold will not be leased or approved as proposed. At that point, the lessee will have the opportunity to adjust the project and resubmit it for analysis of threshold conformance.

Mitigation evaluation in this analysis must be demonstrated as being successful and capable of achieving the level of mitigation assumed to be in conformance with carrying capacity thresholds. This mitigation would be considered committed if the action were approved or the lease were issued.

There are no identifiable implementation priorities.

### 2.2.2.5 Monitoring

An initial baseline will be established to provide a realistic projection of the present carrying capacity situation. This projection will be based on current development activities and projects likely to occur in the immediate future. Once established, baseline monitoring will be necessary to maintain accuracy. Monitoring will evaluate current mitigation or impact-causing activities, which will affect the carrying capacity situation.

Individual project impacts will be monitored to assure the level of mitigation assumed in the analysis is achieved. Leasing or approval provisions will allow for assignment of additional mitigation, should monitoring reveal inadequacies.

### 2.2.2.6 Support

The carrying capacity thresholds (Table 2-A) were established by BLM with assistance from cooperating regulatory agencies. BLM will assume the lead role in use of this concept as a management tool in the decisionmaking process for oil shale leasing. However, assistance from other government agencies, the public, lessees, and private developers will be necessary in establishing and maintaining specific methodologies for monitoring impacts affecting threshold levels. Assistance from these participants will also be necessary in data acquisition, interpretation of data, and conflict resolution.

## 2.2.3 Management of Other Mineral Resources

### 2.2.3.1 Objectives

- Maximize the availability of the federal mineral estate for mineral exploration and development.
- Facilitate orderly, economic, and environmentally sound development of mineral resources within the principles of balanced multiple-use management.
- Maximize the number of acres of federal estate open for mineral resource development, while providing for protection of other resources, allowing for resource recovery, and mitigation of impacts.

### 2.2.3.2 Planned Actions

#### *Sodium Minerals*

- Exclude all public lands in the planning area from further sodium-only mineral leasing until existing sodium leases and any approved Preference Right Lease Applications are developed or a proven demand arises. Regardless, additional sodium-only leasing will not occur if such development will reduce the future recoverability of the oil shale resource.
- Multimineral recovery (sodium minerals and oil shale) will be encouraged within the multimineral zone (Map 2-B). In an effort to prove the success of multimineral recovery technology, the Secretary of the Interior has the authority to make noncommercial research tracts available. The Secretary also has the discretion to allow leased or exchanged oil shale research lands to be redelineated or expanded to a commercial-sized lease at a later date should improved multimineral resource recovery technology be proven.



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- Site-specific leasing restrictions to protect other resources will be imposed before leasing or exploration where another resource is shown as having priority.
- Multimineral leasing (sodium and oil shale) will be allowed within the multimineral zone (Map 2-B) once improved multimineral recovery technology is proven, as determined by the BLM State Director.

### *Coal*

- Approximately 29,610 acres of federal lands are available for consideration for future coal leasing by underground mining. Of this amount, 24,635 acres are also available for consideration for future coal leasing by surface mining (Map 2-C).
- Site-specific restrictions will be imposed before leasing to protect other critical resource values. Restrictions will become part of the lease and mine permit on approved mine plans.
- Exploration and development of new and existing oil and gas mineral leases will have priority over coal development. Future coal leasing will provide for the future extraction of oil and gas minerals through stipulations in the coal lease.

### *Oil and Gas*

- All public lands in the planning area will continue to remain open to oil and gas leasing.
- Standard oil and gas lease terms will apply to the entire area.
- Oil and gas exploration and development will have priority in known geologic structures and their future redelineations (shown as oil and gas MPAs on RMP map).
- Future oil shale leases within the oil and gas MPAs will have stipulations applied to permit future oil and gas development (RMP map).
- Oil and gas leasing will be subject to the terms of approval cited in the White River Resource Area Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA (February 1982). These will be updated to reflect changes appropriate to implement plan decisions and to comply with current policy (i.e., all stipulations must be shown to be necessary and justifiable).
- A 5-year plan of development will be requested for new or reissued leases to facilitate orderly development and to consolidate transportation needs.

### *Locatable Minerals*

- Approximately 33 percent of the public lands in the planning area will remain open to entry for exploration, location, and development of locatable minerals under the provisions of the General Mining Law of 1872, as amended. Approximately 67 percent is under protective withdrawal from locatable minerals entry.

### *Mineral Materials*

- Public lands will be available to provide mineral materials as demand arises.
- A mineral materials inventory will be conducted to identify new sand and gravel sites and quantities available at existing sites. Existing or previously used sites will be favored.
- Development of mineral materials will be excluded from mandatory protection areas (RMP map).

### **2.2.3.3 Rationale**

#### *Sodium Minerals*

Recovery of the sodium minerals by conventional underground methods could result in 50 to 80 percent of the total resource irretrievably left in the ground. Although in situ recovery of nahcolite by solution mining is currently being tested in the basin, there are looming questions concerning the effect such prototype mining will have on the future recoverability of the coexisting rich oil shale resource. Implementation of this action will minimize potentially foregone resources and will facilitate maximum recoverability of the rich multimineral resources.

#### *Coal*

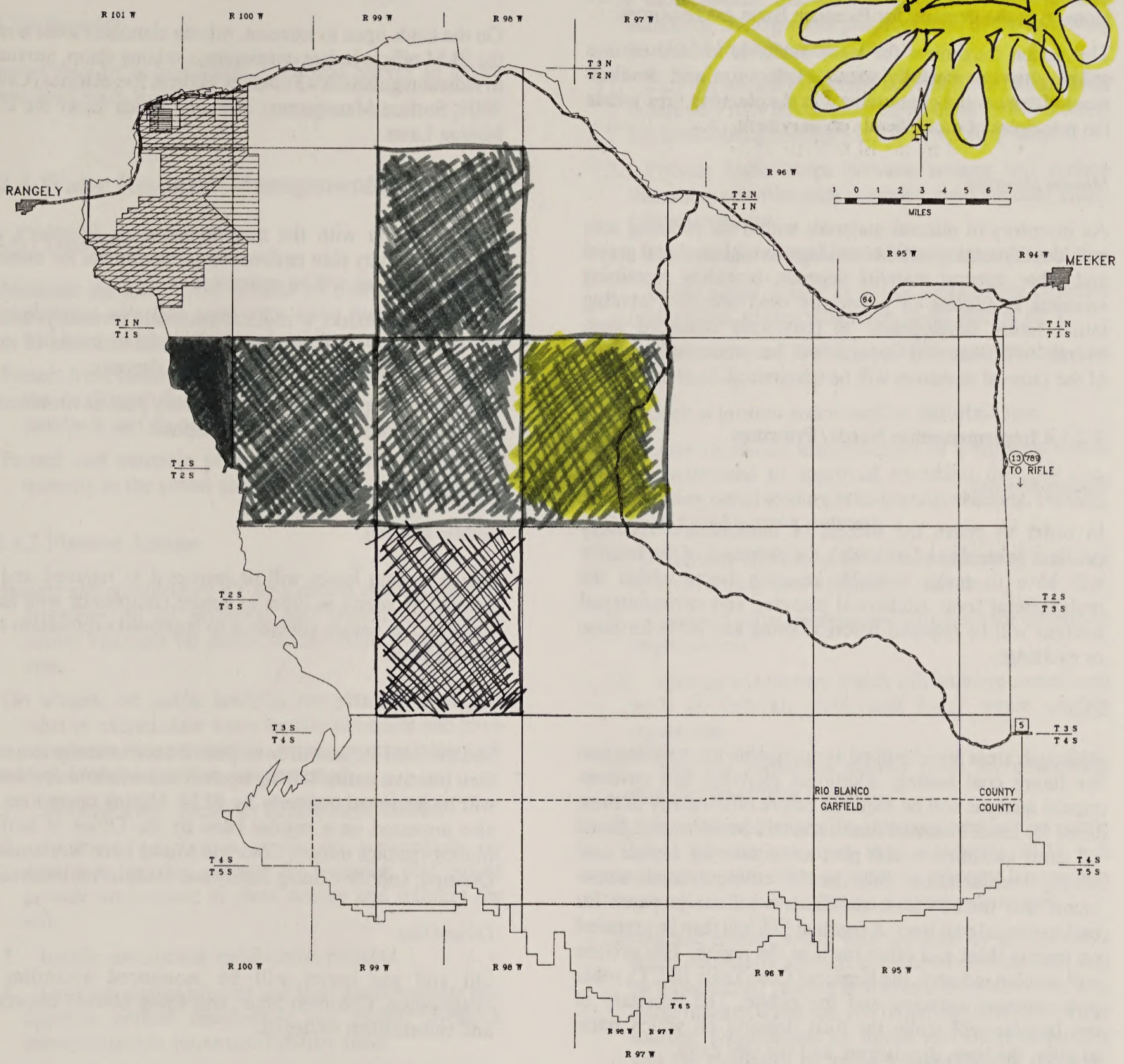
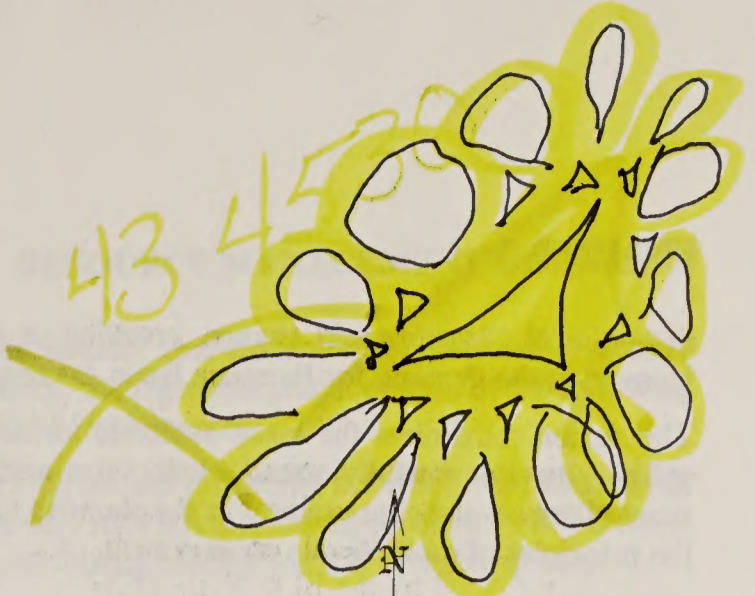
Although current economic conditions for production of coal in the planning area with present technology is currently low, this plan potentially makes available 29,610 acres of land in the planning area for future leasing of coal.




#### *Oil and Gas*

Oil and gas production has been and remains the most significant mineral activity within the Piceance Basin Planning Area. Of the two, natural gas comprises the principle mineral production. National and regional demand for natural gas from the basin is expected to be low because of the large quantities of gas being found elsewhere in the United States and the discouraging economic conditions surrounding natural gas exploration, production, and transportation. However, present economic conditions and



43 45 47



-  SUITABLE FOR SURFACE OR SUBSURFACE MINING
-  SUITABLE FOR SUBSURFACE MINING ONLY
-  EXISTING LEASES

# LANDS ACCEPTABLE FOR FUTURE COAL LEASING CONSIDERATION



## CHAPTER 2

the political climate could change, resulting in an abrupt increase in the demand for Piceance Basin gas resources.

This action maximizes the lands available for and ensures orderly, environmentally sound exploration and development of the oil and gas resources in the planning area within the principles of multiple-use management.

### *Mineral Materials*

An inventory of mineral materials within the planning area will identify total quantities and locations of sand and gravel and other mineral material deposits, including remaining amounts at existing or previously used sites. By favoring initial future development at previously disturbed sites, overall environmental impacts will be minimized and use of the mineral resources will be maximized.

#### **2.2.3.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities**

### *Sodium Minerals*

In order to prove the success of multimineral recovery (sodium minerals and oil shale), the Secretary of the Interior will have to make available research tracts within the multimineral zone. Additional planning and environmental analysis will be required before offering any lands for lease or exchange.

### *Coal*

Although areas are identified as acceptable for consideration for future coal leasing, additional planning and environmental analysis will be required before offering any of these lands for lease. Potential coal tracts will be delineated, based on lands identified in this plan as suitable for further coal leasing consideration. Site-specific environmental assessments that include lease stipulations will be prepared for each potential coal tract. A regional EIS will then be prepared on leasing these and other tracts in the region. This process will involve industry, the Regional Coal Team (RCT), other governmental agencies, and the public. The Secretary of the Interior will make the final decision on which tracts to offer, the lease stipulations, and the sale dates.

### *Oil and Gas*

Priority 1. The Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA will be updated to reflect necessary and justifiable changes to existing and new additional stipulations to protect other critical resource values.

### *Locatable Minerals*

On the lands open to location, mining claimants must notify the BLM offices before developing a mining claim, pursuant to federal regulations 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 3809, Surface Management of Public Lands under the U.S. Mining Laws.

### *Mineral Materials*

In conjunction with the mineral materials inventory, an umbrella activity plan environmental assessment for mineral material disposal will be completed.

Priority 1. Conduct a mineral materials inventory within the planning area on total quantities and locations of sand and gravel and other mineral material deposits.

Priority 2. Prepare an umbrella activity plan environmental assessment for mineral material disposal.

#### **2.2.3.5 Monitoring**

### *Sodium Minerals*

Active sodium leases will be inspected as required and as deemed necessary in order to ensure compliance with lease terms and to ensure adherence to approved exploration and mining plans.

### *Coal*

Inactive coal leases will be inspected once annually to assure their inactive status. Mining operations on federal coal leases will be inspected quarterly by BLM. Mining operations are also inspected on a regular basis by the Office of Surface Mining (surface mines), Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Division, and the Mining Safety and Health Administration.

### *Oil and Gas*

Oil and gas leases will be monitored according to Washington, Colorado State, and Craig District inspection and enforcement strategies.

### *Locatable Minerals*

Operations carried out under the General Mining Law of 1872 (as amended) will be inspected periodically, as determined necessary to ensure compliance with specific notices, plans of operations, laws, and regulations.

### *Mineral Materials*

Mineral materials actions will be monitored, as determined necessary by the terms and conditions of the specific permit.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.2.3.6 Support

Support may be required from Cadastral Survey to locate public land boundaries.

## 2.2.4 Water Resource Management

### 2.2.4.1 Objectives

- Maintain the integrity of streams on public lands in the planning area that meet state water quality standards and have acceptable channel stability.
- Protect from further degradation and, if feasible, improve the quality of those streams that do not meet state standards and do not have acceptable channel stability.
- Protect and maintain present groundwater quality and quantity to the extent possible.

### 2.2.4.2 Planned Actions

- Initiate and complete by FY 89 a stream channel stability inventory on all perennial and critical intermittent stream channels on public lands within the planning area.
- On streams on public lands in the planning area that meet or exceed state water quality standards and have acceptable channel stability, management actions such as the following will be implemented:
  1. Monitor water quality or stream bank stability.
  2. Improve vegetation cover on watersheds by developing grazing systems for livestock that would provide an increase in plant density and stabilize the soil.
  3. Initiate streambank stabilization projects.
  4. Develop grazing systems and land improvements that optimize animal distribution and reduce livestock concentration in important riparian areas.
  5. Construct check dams on intermittent stream drainages to reduce sediment load caused by upland erosion.
  6. Apply recommendations made in the Northwest Colorado 208 Plan to BLM water quality control and improvement projects, if feasible. Ensure that the best management practices available are incorporated.
  7. Construct salinity control structures and evaporation ponds to reduce the quantity of salts entering streams.

—On those streams that do not meet state water quality standards, management practices such as the following would be implemented:

1. Exclude surface disturbing activities from watersheds where they may be contributing to, or have the potential for contributing to, degradation of water quality.
  2. Provide buffer strips between streams and surface disturbing activities such as mining, road building, clear-cutting trees, etc.
  3. Ensure rapid revegetation of disturbed areas.
  4. Utilize water course structural engineering practices (gully plugs, gabion structures, dams, riprap, etc.).
  5. Limit off-road vehicle (ORV) use within the watershed.
  6. Control erosion and runoff on disturbed sites.
  7. Limit vegetation manipulations or treatments within the watershed to approved treatment methods (i.e., spraying, aerial seeding, roto-beating, chaining, burning, or designed grazing systems).
  8. Place time restrictions on surface disturbing activities to avoid spring thaw and runoff seasons.
  9. Construct snow management structures for watershed improvement.
  10. Manage in a manner which will improve compliance with all federal, state, and local water quality regulations.
  11. Develop watershed activity plans for controlling erosion and salinity transport.
- On those streams within the planning area not on public lands that do not meet state standards, BLM will cooperate with other agencies or adjacent landowners to improve water quality on a case-by-case basis.
  - Spring and stream reliant uses supplied by groundwater when potentially affected by mineral development will be mitigated by placing restrictions on penetration into subterranean water or by requiring alternate water sources. Degradation by toxins and other impurities will be regulated by present management practices. Additional stipulations will also be placed on groundwater usage and disposal, as determined necessary, on a case-by-case basis.
  - Encourage the establishment of an industrial association of mineral developers to coordinate monitoring and mitigation efforts of those industries affecting the groundwater resources within the planning area. Monitoring and mitigation requirements to protect the groundwater will also be stipulated on mining activities by state and federal agencies, the lessee, and/or industrial associations.



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### 2.2.4.3 Rationale

The surface water and groundwater resources in the Piceance Basin Planning Area are susceptible to increased impacts, primarily from energy and minerals development. The actions identified above will ensure that such impacts will be minimized and mitigated in conformance with federal and state laws, regulations, and policies.

### 2.2.4.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Additional environmental analysis and activity planning will be required following completion of the stream channel stability inventory before implementation of any specific management actions on any specific waters. Additional environmental analysis will be required on all project proposals/land-use authorizations on a case-by-case basis to determine potential impacts and specific mitigation.

Priority 1. Complete stream channel stability inventory by FY 89.

Priority 2. Develop watershed management activity plan for planning area with implementation of specific management actions prioritized as follows:

1. On those streams not meeting state water quality standards.
2. On those streams meeting or exceeding state water quality standards.
3. On those streams not on public lands not meeting state water quality standards.

Priority 3. Encourage the establishment of an industrial association of mineral developers.

### 2.2.4.5 Monitoring

The U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division, is currently monitoring numerous sites in the planning area for surface water quality, flow data, and sediment yield (varies with monitoring site instrumentation and funding capabilities).

Based upon the stream channel stability inventory, certain streams will have watershed management activity plans developed for them that will contain specific monitoring plans.

Numerous groundwater monitoring projects are currently underway within the basin by both private industry and federal agencies.

Monitoring of water resources, both surface and groundwater, will continue to be applied on a case-by-case basis, as determined necessary, to all actions on public lands which have the potential to impact these resources.

### 2.2.4.6 Support

Engineering support will be required at the activity planning level in the design and construction of water quality and erosion projects contained in watershed activity plans. Specifications and water laws of state, federal, and local authorities will be met. Monitoring support will be required from the U.S. Geological Survey - Water Resources Division.

## 2.2.5 Soils

### 2.2.5.1 Objective

- Impede deterioration of soil conditions and stabilize and rehabilitate areas where accelerated erosion and runoff have resulted in unacceptable resource conditions.

### 2.2.5.2 Planned Actions

- Determine soil productivity potential and engineering suitability of individual surface disturbing projects on a case-by-case basis. Based upon this analysis and on site soil investigations, apply pertinent mitigation, as necessary, to minimize soil loss and ensure soil stability.
- Perform additional compliance work on significant surface disturbing projects to ensure adherence with pertinent stipulations.
- Avoid surface disturbing activities, where possible, on areas with high susceptibility for wind and water erosion, saline soils, and especially steep clayey slopes (i.e., fragile soils). These areas are shown as soil MPAs on the RMP map.
- Enforce seasonal road closures during moist periods when the soil surface is saturated to an average depth of 3 inches.
- Implement an improved road maintenance program to minimize erosional losses.
- Develop watershed activity plans to halt accelerated erosion on identified significant problem areas.

### 2.2.5.3 Rationale

The soil resource is the basis for all biological production. It is also the construction material utilized for roads, drill pads, foundations, pits, and numerous other industrial uses. With the potential for the number of surface-disturbing activities in the Piceance Basin to increase, primarily because of energy and minerals development, it is important to ensure the protection and maintenance of this resource through



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

implementation of wise and prudent management actions, as described.

### 2.2.5.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Priority 1. Develop watershed activity plans on identified significant problem areas.

Priority 2. Implement improved road maintenance program.

### 2.2.5.5 Monitoring

Monitoring of specific surface-disturbing activities will occur, as determined necessary, on a case-by-case basis to ensure adherence to pertinent stipulations/mitigation.

### 2.2.5.6 Support

Support is needed from all resources in designing and approving projects so as to reduce soil erosion and enhance soil productivity.

## 2.2.6 Forestry

### 2.2.6.1 Objectives

—Manage, in perpetuity, forested areas on a sustained annual yield basis for multiple resource values.

### 2.2.6.2 Planned Actions

—Continue implementation of the current White River Resource Area 5-year sale plan in conformance with the White River Resource Area Forest Management Plan. This plan identifies the annual commercial sale of approximately 2,500 cords of pinyon-juniper firewood and 250,000 board feet of Douglas fir sawtimber. Compliance checks will be necessary on all existing and proposed timber sales. Additional product sales to individuals will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

—When development actions impact forested areas, developers will be required to purchase all timber products before the project begins. Stipulations for timber disposal and rehabilitation of project sites will be included on each development action.

### 2.2.6.3 Rationale

This action will allow continued advertised and negotiated sales of forest products to meet local and regional demand of both commercial and individual harvesters. This type of management will allow reasonable harvesting of timber

products while ensuring their perpetuity within the principles of multiple-use management.

### 2.2.6.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

None identified.

### 2.2.6.5 Monitoring

A logging plan, periodic inspections, and a final inspection are required on all commercial timber sales. Inspections are conducted to ensure adherence with all contract requirements.

### 2.2.6.6 Support

None.

## 2.2.7 Livestock Grazing Management

Management of livestock grazing in the Piceance Basin will essentially continue as identified in the Proposed Grazing Management Program for the White River Resource Area, Final EIS, and as approved in the subsequent Rangeland Program Summary. Outlined below is a summary of the major components of the program affecting the Piceance Basin. For more detailed information on the program, consult the Proposed Grazing Management Program for the White River Resource Area, Final EIS - Volumes 1 and 2 and the Rangeland Program Summary, first and second updates.

### 2.2.7.1 Objectives

—Present plant composition will be maintained or improved where rangeland condition is presently fair. Rangeland condition will be improved on all areas presently in unsatisfactory (poor) condition.

—The current maximum authorized forage allocation for livestock in Piceance Basin will be increased from 57,016 animal unit months (AUMs) to 64,011 AUMs over the long-term (20 years).

—Fifty percent of the edible vegetation available on these lands is allocated to the predominant consumptive users: livestock, big game wildlife, and wild horses. The remaining vegetation production is reserved for plant maintenance, nongame and small game wildlife, and watershed protection.

—Individual allotment management plans (AMPs) will provide for a period of deferment from livestock grazing during the critical spring growth period so that forage



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plants can fulfill their basic requirement for maintenance, growth, and reproduction.

### 2.2.7.2 Planned Actions

- Adjustments in livestock grazing use have been and are being made based on individual allotment monitoring so that levels of livestock use are consistent with overall program objectives of improving rangeland condition and productivity. These adjustments are made after careful consultation with the affected range user so that any negative impacts on the operation are minimized.
- Develop AMPs for 24 allotments identified for intensive management and five allotments identified for less intensive management. Continue intensive management of existing AMPs on the following allotments: Dry Fork, Segar Gulch, Piceance Mountain, Reagles, and Square S.
- AMPs will be developed in consultation with allotment operators and will identify grazing systems, specific range improvements, and will be designed to coordinate livestock grazing with other land uses to meet multiple-use objectives.
- Continue intensive monitoring studies (trend and utilization) on existing AMPs and all other allotments identified for intensive management.
- In conjunction with the development of AMPs and their associated grazing systems, range improvements will be constructed to facilitate grazing system operation, improve livestock and wildlife distribution, and foster the broader goals of improving public rangeland condition and productivity.
- Impacts to livestock grazing from energy and mineral development will require mitigation. Use adjustments may be necessary on certain allotments.

### 2.2.7.3 Rationale

Eighty-three percent of the livestock in the planning area are produced on ranches that are highly dependent upon public lands. Fourteen percent are produced on ranches that show a medium dependency; thus, livestock grazing on the federal range has a highly significant economic impact in the area. Considerable big game wildlife grazing use occurs within the planning area, primarily from the Piceance Basin mule deer herd, considered to be the largest migratory deer herd in North America. In addition, an established wild horse herd utilizes much of the western part of the basin. Domestic livestock are the most effective, controllable means of managing rangelands for a variety of uses.

Continued management of livestock grazing according to the objectives and actions outlined above will ensure a balanced allocation of the forage resource, perpetuate economically and historically important uses of the range, and mitigate impacts to grazing caused by increased energy and mineral development, all within the principles of multiple-use management mandated by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 and the Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978.

### 2.2.7.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Priority 1. Continue scheduled adjustments in grazing use as outlined in the Rangeland Program Summary, Second Update.

Priority 2. Implement AMPs and associated range improvements on 24 Piceance Basin allotments identified for intensive management. This will be dependent on availability of funding and policy.

Priority 3. Implement AMPs on five allotments identified for less intensive management (as funding and staffing permits).

Priority 4. Continue monitoring studies on all existing intensive management allotments.

### 2.2.7.5 Monitoring

The following studies will continue to be conducted to monitor and to evaluate the effectiveness of the grazing management program:

- Actual Use. Permittees will record actual use dates and numbers of livestock on the allotment with spot checks made by BLM.
- Utilization. The percentage of a plant's annual growth removed by grazing animals will be monitored in key areas.
- Range Trend. Photographic studies and measurements of trend in range condition, ground cover, and plant composition will be taken in key areas.
- Climate. Precipitation data will be gathered and correlated with other study data.

Monitoring will occur in two phases. During the first phase of determining livestock grazing capacities, actual use, utilization, and climate data will be collected each year for the first 5 years, with range trend data collected the first, third, and fifth years. This data will be collected on all allotments scheduled for intensive management in addition to allotments scheduled for less intensive management that would have either an increase or a reduction in livestock grazing levels. These studies will be established, as needed,



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

on the remaining less intensive allotments as AMPs are developed for these allotments during the first 5 years.

During the second phase, after AMPs have been developed and livestock grazing capacities have been established, data from these studies will continue to be collected but at less frequent intervals. This data will be collected after a complete cycle of the grazing system has been attained, about every 3 or 4 years, for each allotment.

The results of the studies conducted in the first 5 years will be evaluated and adjustments in the initial grazing decisions will be made, if they are needed. The significance of any changes in livestock numbers, periods of use, etc., will be evaluated in an environmental assessment. The AMPs will then be revised to reflect the change in operation.

### 2.2.7.6 Support

None.

## 2.2.8 Wild Horses

Wild horse management will continue according to decisions approved in the White River Resource Area Herd Management Area Plan. The plan designates the areas on which horses will be managed and states how the maintenance of a viable herd will be achieved. The following section summarizes the major aspects of wild horse management applicable to the Piceance Basin. For more detailed information, please refer to the White River Resource Area Herd Management Area Plan, available for public review at the BLM office, Meeker, Colorado.

### 2.2.8.1 Objectives

- Maintain wild horse herds at a level consistent with the carrying capacity of the area, while providing adequate forage for livestock and wildlife.
- Improve range condition in the herd management area within 15 years.
- Maintain a moderate level of utilization (maximum of 60 percent) on key forage species that will allow for an increase in these species.
- Maintain the free-roaming behavior of wild horses.
- Maintain a healthy, viable breeding population.
- Provide for the protection of wild horses from harassment and unauthorized capture.

### 2.2.8.2 Planned Actions

- Maintain a population of between 65-100 wild horses. Periodically remove excess horses as determined necessary.
- Manipulate vegetation to improve forage production in areas where more than adequate tree cover for wild horses exists.
- Construct water developments to improve distribution of wild horses, livestock, and wildlife.
- Conduct utilization studies within the herd management area before and after livestock use to differentiate between wild horse and livestock. Make adjustments in numbers of grazing animals based on these studies.
- No interior fences will be built within the herd management area.
- Maintain access for wild horses among livestock allotments within the management area.
- Maintain sex ratio at approximately 50-50.
- Maintain a herd with at least 15 percent foals.
- Protect watering sources from disturbance.
- Mitigate habitat loss because of energy development. Unmitigatable impacts from large-scale oil shale development to the wild horse herd management area or herd population objective would require a revision to the Resource Management Plan.
- BLM personnel are periodically in the herd management area. All personnel will be made aware of the policy concerning protection of wild horses so that violations can be reported.

### 2.2.8.3 Rationale

- Maintaining grazing animals at a level consistent with forage production will allow for a viable wild horse population, livestock for red meat production, and productive wildlife populations without damage to the range resource.
- Improved range condition will provide improved habitat for wild horses. Increased desirable forage will provide improved nutrition for wild horses and will improve soil erosion conditions within the herd area.
- An increase in key species would represent improved range condition and would improve the forage supplies for wild horses, livestock, and wildlife.
- Maintenance of the free-roaming behavior of wild horses would help maintain normal band integrity and herd interactions. In addition, it is one method of providing



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an interchange of the gene pool and lessening the occurrence of interbreeding within the herd unit.

- Maintenance of a healthy, viable breeding population will ensure the survival of wild horses within the herd management area.
- Protection of wild horses from harassment and unauthorized capture is required by the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (Public Law 92-195) and is necessary to maintain a healthy, viable population.

### 2.2.8.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Continue present management to achieve goals outlined in the Herd Area Management Plan subject to available funding.

### 2.2.8.5 Monitoring

BLM personnel will periodically conduct aerial surveys to monitor total numbers of horses, herd number and size, and herd movement. Ground observations during the spring foaling period will add to information on herd productivity. In addition, herd composition, productivity, and mortality estimates will be based on samples taken during horse removal operations.

Photo plot trend studies are presently set up within the wild horse range. These plots will be read the third year after the implementation of AMPs, and then at a minimum of 5-year intervals thereafter.

Utilization in the wild horse management areas will be determined by paired plot and the key forage plant methods (BLM Manual 4412).

Climatic data will be collected in the area in coordination with AMP implementation.

### 2.2.8.6 Support

None.

## 2.2.9 Wildlife and Threatened and Endangered Species

### 2.2.9.1 Objectives

- Continue implementing the Piceance Basin Habitat Management Plan. This plan, which is periodically updated, establishes specific wildlife management goals, identifies key habitat improvement projects, and discusses inventories and monitoring studies necessary

to evaluate wildlife populations and habitats in the context of other public land uses. It also addresses selected means of protecting, stabilizing, or enhancing all wildlife habitats and populations within Piceance Basin. Particular emphasis is applied to riparian-wetland habitats and crucial function habitat of important recreational species (mule deer, elk, sage grouse), raptors, and federal and state listed threatened and endangered species.

- Provide for long-term increases to initial wildlife forage allocations of 36,253 AUMs to 40,501 AUMs over a 20-year period. This allocation will achieve joint BLM/Colorado Division of Wildlife big game population objectives.
- Maintain a minimum carrying capacity threshold on public land in Piceance Basin capable of supporting a wintering mule deer herd of 24,900 animals.
- Reduce the intensity and extent of impacts to wildlife during and following conflicting land-use activities. Integrate wildlife concerns and methods of enhancing wildlife habitats with land-use decision documents and implementation plans. Emphasize the need to minimize and consolidate surface disruption, require prompt and effective reclamation, and ensure conformance through increased compliance efforts.

### 2.2.9.2 Planned Actions

- Continue implementing wildlife habitat improvement projects and inventory/monitoring efforts through the Piceance Basin Habitat Management Plan. Extend priority to crucial habitats of mule deer, elk, sage grouse, raptors, and threatened and endangered species. Project work will be directed at improving forage availability and browse condition on big game winter and transition ranges, enhancing seasonal sage grouse habitats, and protecting and enhancing riparian habitats throughout the basin. Inventories will be implemented, as necessary, to obtain up-to-date species distribution and seasonal use information. Specific monitoring programs will be directed at assessing forage availability, vigor, and utilization, habitat condition and trend, determining the level of competitive forage use between livestock and big game, identifying changes in species distribution and habitat use preference, and assessing the results of habitat improvement projects.
- Continue the practice of recommending project modification or imposing seasonal activity restrictions which minimize long-term damage to wildlife populations and habitats. Prescribe vegetation manipulation and revegetation measures that achieve simultaneous wildlife benefit from other land-use practices.



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- Institute and enforce off-road vehicle restrictions on selected high-value wildlife ranges to minimize harassment of animals during crucial time periods.
- Continue to cooperate with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, private consultants, and academia in evaluating applied research and management techniques, and in conducting inventory and monitoring programs designed to identify or clarify wildlife distribution, habitat use, and seasonal use patterns necessary for developing accurate impact analyses and mitigation strategies.
- Develop and implement a detailed monitoring scheme in conjunction with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to determine mule deer winter range carrying capacity potential in relation to the minimum carrying capacity concept in Piceance Basin. Cumulative energy impacts to mule deer habitats would be continuously monitored and compared to current and minimum carrying capacities. In the event the minimum carrying capacity threshold is reached, subsequent mineral leases/activities will be subject to mitigative constraints to ensure that no further additive impacts occur.
- Encourage establishment of an “Industrial Association” comprised of energy concerns actively engaged in the development of energy/mineral resources in Piceance Basin. The intent of such an organization would be to foster a coordinated approach to wildlife management and mitigative strategies and to facilitate a mutually interactive means of accumulating and sharing wildlife related information and technology.

### 2.2.9.3 Rationale

BLM has committed itself to manage and safeguard all forms of wildlife resources at prescribed and self-sustaining levels on lands it administers. Through various acts, legislation, and policy, BLM is responsible for coordinating a wildlife management program with all other resource uses and land management activities, which will ensure that wildlife objectives and protective provisions are incorporated, on an equal basis, with other resource considerations. BLM is required to utilize its authority to conserve species and subspecies of animals officially listed as threatened and endangered and to ensure that the continued existence of listed species is not jeopardized. It is BLM policy that close working relationships with state wildlife agencies will be maintained and that the planning and implementation of wildlife habitat improvement, maintenance, and protection programs will be coordinated closely with the state's wildlife management priorities.

Because the Piceance Basin supports an extraordinarily large number of mule deer; a rapidly expanding elk herd; and varied small game, varmint, and furbearer populations and

consists of a large, consolidated block of readily accessible public land, the basin remains one of the most attractive locations in Colorado for sport hunting. An average of 33,000 recreation days, derived almost entirely from hunting pursuits, occur annually in the basin. This accounts for half the recreation-related use occurring in the White River Resource Area. Primarily in response to the persistent reputation of the basin as one of the top deer producing areas in northwest Colorado, the influx of big game hunters each fall represents a historically large and dependable source of monetary benefit to the local economies of Meeker, Rangely, and Rifle. In 1981, nonresident hunters alone provided a conservative \$570,000 to the income of Rio Blanco County.

### 2.2.9.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Priority 1. Implement the Piceance Basin Habitat Management Plan as funding and staffing become available. Habitat improvement projects will focus on increasing the productivity and improving the condition of big game winter and transition ranges. This will increase herbaceous yield and water availability on sage grouse summer and fall ranges and protect and encourage riparian growth.

Priority 2. Implement and provide enforcement for an ORV program in an effort to reduce human-induced disturbance on crucial seasonal habitats of mule deer. Continue to impose seasonal activity restrictions where disturbance would adversely affect productivity of sage grouse, big game, raptors, or threatened and endangered species populations.

Priority 3. Evaluate the effectiveness of current mitigative strategies and determine if changes in methodology, objectives, or compliance are warranted. Continue to encourage and evaluate relevant research and technologies that have the potential for increasing the effectiveness of wildlife management practices and monitoring programs, particularly in the context of mineral/energy development and livestock management.

Priority 4. In response to the sequential leasing of oil shale resources, a specific monitoring program will be developed in cooperation with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to provide continuous monitoring of mule deer winter range carrying capacity in relation to the prescribed minimum threshold concept.

### 2.2.9.5 Monitoring

The wildlife monitoring program will include permanent transect browse monitoring studies targeted for big game ranges considered crucial, or those areas where known livestock-wildlife conflicts exist. The intent of such studies is to provide data on the competitive interactions of livestock and big game on particular allotments and to determine



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the effects of deer populations and browsing intensity on browse vigor, condition, and productivity. Monitoring of herbaceous vegetation will be integrated with rangeland monitoring programs as a mutually inclusive monitoring system, particularly on summer and transition ranges of big game, and on all seasonal habitats of sage grouse.

### 2.2.9.6 Support

Assistance from the Colorado Division of Wildlife will be necessary in establishing and maintaining specific methodology for monitoring impacts affecting wildlife carrying capacity threshold levels.

## 2.2.10 Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

### 2.2.10.1 Objectives

- Protect, conserve, and manage existing and proposed federal and state listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species.
- Provide for the conservation of candidate and sensitive plant species.
- Protect and conserve selected occurrences of high priority remnant vegetation associations.

### 2.2.10.2 Planned Actions

- On-the-ground surveys for candidate and sensitive plant species will be required before any surface disturbing activity in areas of previously unsurveyed potential habitat.
- The locations of all known populations of candidate and sensitive plants and selected high priority remnant vegetation associations will be protected from human-induced surface disturbing activities to the extent such protection does not unduly hinder or preclude the exercise of valid existing rights.
- The White River Resource Area Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA will be updated in FY 88 to include all known locations (e.g., legal descriptions) of candidate and sensitive plant species and selected high-priority remnant vegetation associations. The area of protection will include the actual location of the population or occurrence and, if present, adjacent sites critical to their habitat. These locations will be analyzed for possible application of the no surface occupancy

(NSO) stipulation on a case-by-case basis at the time of future new or reissued oil and gas lease approval. This analysis will determine whether or not NSO is necessary and justifiable to protect each population/occurrence. If analysis determines that the NSO stipulation is necessary and justified, then this stipulation will be applied, at the leasing stage, as a permanent condition of the lease. Selected occurrences of important remnant vegetation associations to receive NSO protection shall be determined in consultation and coordination with the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP).

- Those populations/occurrences, upon which analysis determines NSO protection to be neither necessary nor justifiable, shall still be protected where necessary by: 1) requiring relocation or rerouting of proposed well sites, pipelines, roads, other surface facilities, etc., or 2) applying other protective mitigation (i.e., fencing). BLM will effectively regulate/mitigate potential impacts to important populations/occurrences to the degree that existing development rights are not unduly hindered or precluded.
- Other new mineral leases (i.e., oil shale, coal, etc.) shall similarly analyze all known locations of candidate and sensitive plants and selected high-priority remnant vegetation associations for application of the NSO stipulation or other protective mitigation.
- An NSO stipulation precludes any surface occupancy unless and until such activity is specifically approved by the authorized officer upon the completion of additional environmental analysis.
- Right-of-ways, firewood permits, range improvement projects, recreation projects/permits, wildlife habitat improvement projects, and all other land-use authorizations handled on a case-by-case basis shall not be approved as proposed if analysis determines that even with mitigation applied, a known location of a candidate or sensitive plant species or a selected occurrence of a high-priority remnant vegetation association would be adversely impacted. Approval of land uses shall guard against such impacts through requiring of appropriate mitigation (i.e., rerouting a right-of-way, moving a stock pond development, etc.) as determined on a case-by-case basis or, if unmitigatable, by not approving uses (i.e., denying a firewood permit in a certain area, etc.).
- Individual actions with the potential for impacting known populations of candidate and sensitive plants and selected remnant vegetation associations will be monitored during the construction phase, as deemed necessary on a case-by-case basis, to ensure compliance with the NSO stipulation or other protective mitigation.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

—Management prescriptions for those candidate and sensitive plant species and remnant vegetation associations afforded protection and designation within ACECs are listed for each specific ACEC in Section 2.2.16. In addition, ACEC activity plans will be developed to specifically address detailed management and monitoring necessary on the ACEC consistent with the purpose of designation.

—Monitoring programs, which have been developed in conjunction with CNAP, will continue on selected important plant species populations and plant association occurrences. New monitoring may be established on additional populations/occurrences as determined necessary. All monitoring is contingent upon future funding levels. Data obtained from monitoring studies shall be used in verifying effectiveness of existing management measures and to develop future management recommendations, if warranted.

Maps delineating all known locations of candidate and sensitive plant species and remnant vegetation associations in the Piceance Basin are available for public review in the White River Resource Area office in Meeker, Colorado.

### 2.2.10.3 Rationale

Protection of threatened and endangered plant species is required and directed by the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Protection of candidate and sensitive plants and remnant vegetation associations is discretionary, with guidance provided by BLM policy. The approved actions were developed only after careful consideration of all applicable factors including: important and/or unique environmental values, alternative potential resource uses and anticipated effects, historic and existing resource uses and effects, public concern, multiple-use management principles, and all relevant laws and policy. In addition, these actions were determined to best serve the public interest.

### 2.2.10.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Following updating of the White River Resource Area Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA, additional analysis will be required on a case-by-case basis for application of the NSO stipulation or other pertinent mitigation on new or reissued leases to protect important plant populations/occurrences. Other new mineral leases will similarly require additional analysis.

Selected occurrences of important remnant vegetation associations to receive NSO protection shall be determined in consultation and coordination with the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP).

Priority 1. Update the White River Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA.

Priority 2. Identify, in consultation and coordination with CNAP, high priority remnant vegetation associations to receive NSO protection.

Priority 3. Continue monitoring in coordination with CNAP. Implement new monitoring if necessary.

### 2.2.10.5 Monitoring

Individual actions with the potential for impacting known populations of candidate and sensitive plants and selected remnant vegetation associations will be monitored at the construction phase, as deemed necessary on a case-by-case basis, to ensure compliance with the NSO stipulation or other pertinent mitigation.

Monitoring programs, which have been developed in conjunction with CNAP, will continue on selected important plant species populations and plant association occurrences. New monitoring may be established on additional populations/occurrences as determined by BLM. All monitoring is contingent upon future funding levels. Data obtained from monitoring studies shall be used in verifying effectiveness of existing management measures and to develop future management recommendations, if warranted.

### 2.2.10.6 Support

Support is required from CNAP in determining selected occurrences of high priority remnant vegetation associations for application of NSO protection. Their support is also required in the operation of the monitoring program.

## 2.2.11 Cultural and Paleontological Resource Management

### 2.2.11.1 Objectives

—Continue to manage cultural and paleontological resources as nonrenewable resources according to all pertinent laws and regulations.

—Continue to ensure that all sites that are listed on, or potentially eligible for listing on, the National Register of Historic Places are identified and assessed through the Section 106 consultation process as a result of any surface-disturbing action.

—Excavate and analyze a representative sampling of cultural sites in order to answer regional research design questions.

—Develop an interpretive program that includes a permanent display in the office of the White River



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Resource Area and installation of informational signs at selected site locations.

- Develop a public awareness program, including brochures and programs, for community groups and schools.
- Manage paleontological resources according to the Colorado BLM classification system.

### 2.2.11.2 Planned Actions

- Continue to evaluate all proposed surface-disturbing actions to determine inventory needs and sites potentially impacted by such activities. The cost of mitigating adverse direct impacts because of development is primarily the responsibility of the permittee/lessee.
- Selected sites will be evaluated for their data potential and, if appropriate, identified as sites containing scientific data pertinent to the regional research design.
- Sites such as Duck Creek Wickiup Village will be identified for placement of informational signs to explain the resource. A permanent display will be developed for the White River Resource Area Office as funding and staffing are available.
- A public awareness program will be developed, as funding and staffing permit, to educate the public of the value of cultural resources and reduce vandalism to sites on public land.
- Surface inventories of the Piceance Basin will be used to refine and improve the BLM paleontological classification scheme for fossil remains.

### 2.2.11.3 Rationale

The objectives and planned actions are consistent with all pertinent laws, regulations, and Colorado BLM policy. In addition, they serve the public interest by supplying a resource base for scientific investigation as well as other resource uses.

### 2.2.11.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Priority 1. Develop, purchase, and post informational signs on identified sites.

Priority 2. Develop and implement public awareness program.

Priority 3. Develop and implement scientific investigations.

### 2.2.11.5 Monitoring

The program objectives and selected sites will be monitored to determine effectiveness of the program and additional needs for site protection or excavation.

### 2.2.11.6 Support

None.

## 2.2.12 Recreation and Visual Resource Management

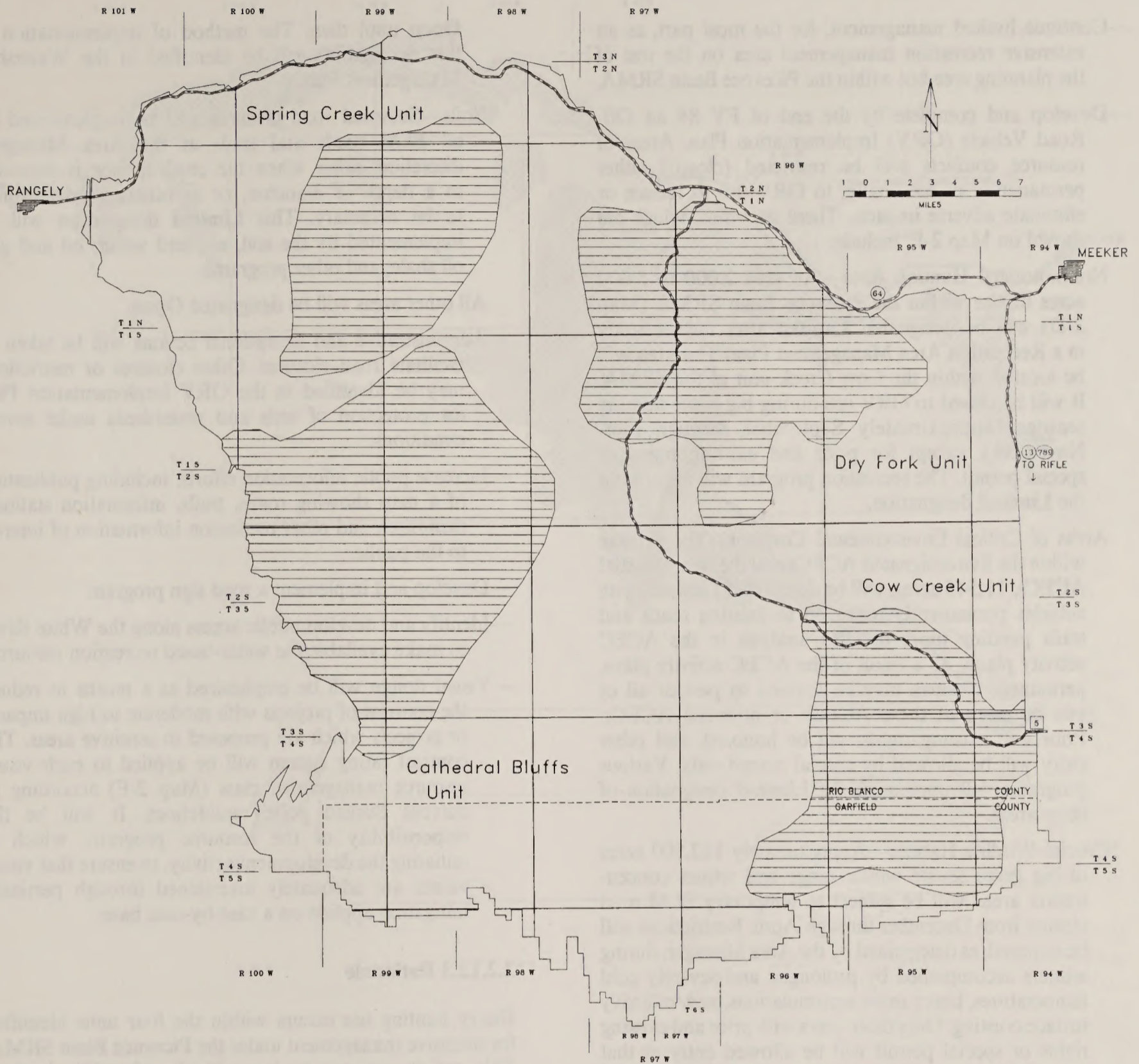
### 2.2.12.1 Objectives

- Protect the recreation resource and upgrade the quality of user experience and services.
- Maintain established recreation opportunity spectrum classes upon implementation of all planned management actions.
- Ensure maintenance and minimize degradation of existing scenic quality classes.

### 2.2.12.2 Planned Actions

- Intensively manage the four high hunting use areas, shown in Map 2-D, as the Piceance Basin Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). This SRMA will be made up of the four following units:
  - a. Cathedral Bluffs Unit
  - b. Cow Creek Unit
  - c. Dry Fork Unit
  - d. Spring Creek Unit
- Develop and complete a Recreation Area Management Plan identifying specific projects and management actions within the Piceance Basin SRMA. This plan will identify access and parking in high use areas that need improvement. In addition, a seasonal visitor services program will be established that will include a field program and information stations.
- Establish a nonmotorized hunting area within the Cow Creek Unit of the Piceance Basin SRMA after completion of the Recreation Area Management Plan. Motorized vehicles and horse access will be eliminated during hunting seasons and use will be restricted to foot access only, except users with prior valid and existing rights. The exact size, location, and management actions will be detailed in the Recreation Area Management Plan.





# PICEANCE BASIN

## SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

—Continue limited management, for the most part, as an extensive recreation management area on the rest of the planning area not within the Piceance Basin SRMA.

—Develop and complete by the end of FY 88 an Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Implementation Plan. Areas of resource conflicts will be restricted (closed) either permanently or seasonally, to ORV use to reduce or eliminate adverse impacts. These decisions, which are shown on Map 2-E, include:

**Nonmotorized Hunting Area**—An area 2,000 to 5,000 acres in size within the Piceance Basin SRMA (Map 2-D) will be designated **Limited** after further study in a Recreation Area Management Plan. This area will be located within the Cow Creek unit of the SRMA. It will be closed to ORV use during big game hunting seasons (approximately September through mid-November), except for prior and existing rights or special permit. The recreation program will implement the **Limited** designation.

**Areas of Critical Environmental Concern**—The acreage within the five designated ACECs and the two potential ACECs, 11,545 acres, will be designated **Limited**, with vehicles permanently restricted to existing roads and trails pending more detailed analysis in the ACEC activity plans. As a result of the ACEC activity plans, permanent closures may be applied to part or all of one or more of these ACECs or potential ACECs. Prior and existing rights will be honored, and other entry will be allowed by special permit only. Various programs will implement the **Limited** designation of these areas.

**Crucial Wildlife Habitat**—Approximately 162,500 acres of big game severe winter range and winter concentration areas will be subject to temporary BLM road closure from December through April. Restrictions will be imposed, as determined by the Area Manager, during winters accompanied by prolonged and severely cold temperatures, heavy snow accumulations, and/or heavy surface crusting. Only those users with prior and existing rights or special permit will be allowed entry at that time. This area will be designated **Limited** and will have restrictions implemented by the wildlife program.

**Watersheds**—Sensitive watersheds, as identified through ongoing watershed inventories, will be designated **Limited** in subsequent Watershed Management Plans, requiring vehicles to remain on existing roads and trails except for prior and existing rights and special permit. No area estimates are given for this designation at this time. The inventories are expected to be completed in 1989 and Watershed Management Plans should be completed within a few years. This **Limited** designation will not be implemented by the soil, air, and water program until that time and will therefore, be managed

**Open** until then. The method of implementation of this designation will be identified in the Watershed Management Plan.

**Soils**—Seasonal road closures will be implemented on all BLM roads and trails at the Area Manager's discretion either when the road surface is saturated to a depth of 3 inches, or as otherwise determined to be necessary. This **Limited** designation will be implemented by the soil, air, and water; oil and gas; oil shale; and other programs.

All other areas will be designated **Open**.

—Administrative and operational actions will be taken to facilitate road closures. Other closures or restrictions may be identified in the ORV Implementation Plan for protection of soils and watersheds under severe conditions.

—Increase public information efforts, including publication of a map showing roads, trails, information stations, campsites, and other recreation information of interest to the public.

—Develop and implement a road sign program.

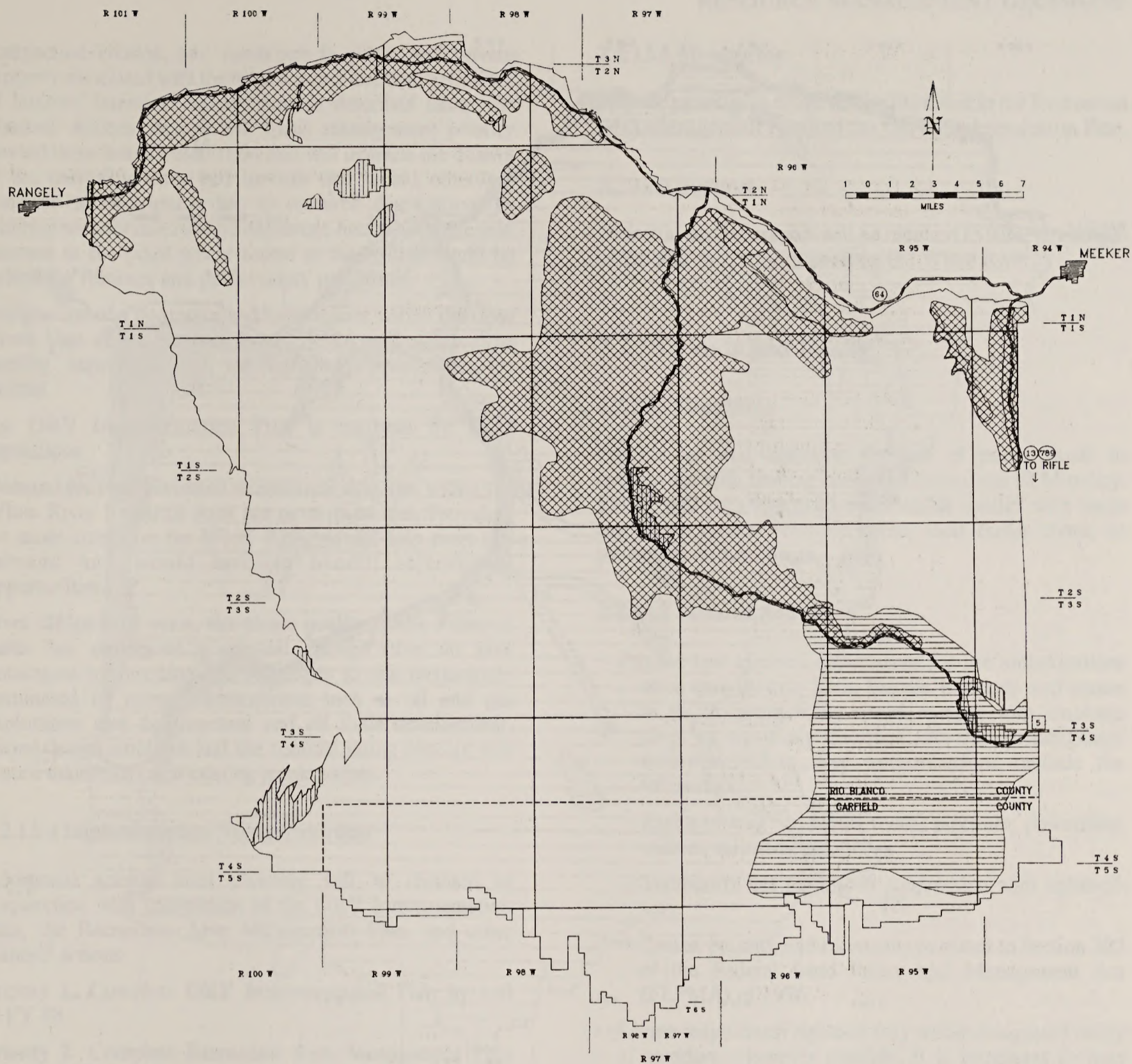
—Identify and develop public access along the White River to make available the water-based recreation resource.

—Visual design will be emphasized as a means to reduce the contrast of projects with moderate to high impacts or projects which are proposed in sensitive areas. The contrast rating system will be applied to each visual resource management class (Map 2-F) according to current Bureau policy guidelines. It will be the responsibility of the resource program, which is initiating the development activity, to ensure that visual values are adequately maintained through pertinent mitigation applied on a case-by-case basis.

### 2.2.12.3 Rationale

Heavy hunting use occurs within the four units identified for intensive management under the Piceance Basin SRMA. This activity occurs on large blocks of public land in semiprimitive motorized and roaded natural areas that produce a high quality recreation opportunity under heavy use with a high percentage of user satisfaction. About 33,000 recreation days related to hunting occur annually with about 92 percent of the use resulting from recreationists outside the local area and over 50 percent of this attributed to out-of-state recreationists. Other large blocks of public land which can sustain similar concentrated, heavy recreational opportunities which produce a corresponding high degree of user satisfaction are not readily available in the region. SRMA designation and development of a Recreation Area Management Plan will intensify recreation management and help reduce littering, vegetation damage or loss, soil



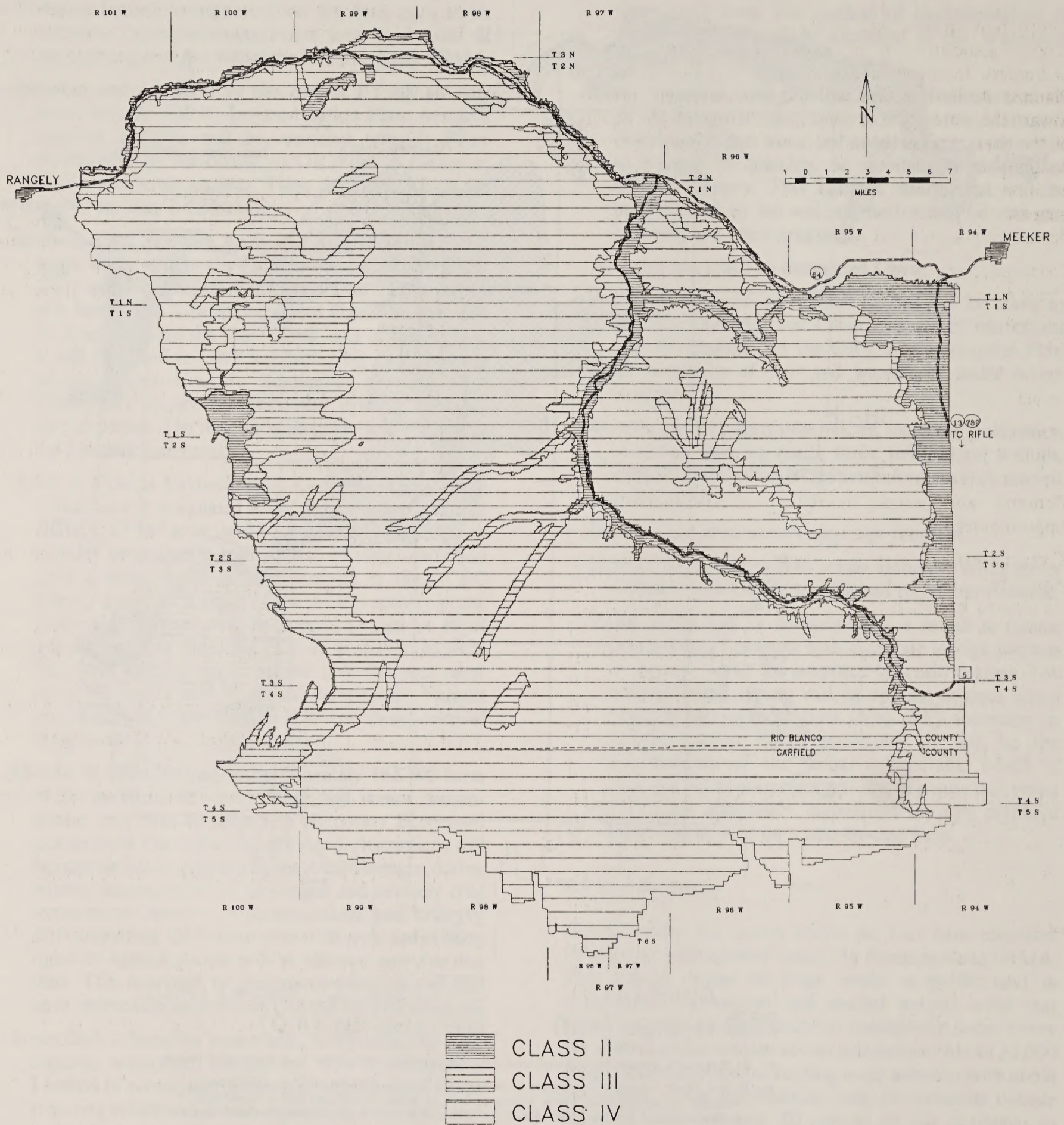


- |   |               |   |                       |
|---|---------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | Open (A)      |  | (See "C" below) (A,C) |
|  | Limited (A,B) |  | Limited (A,D)         |

- A- All BLM roads subject to seasonal, emergency closure when saturated to a depth of 3 inches.
- B- All BLM roads subject to temporary, seasonal road closure (approx. DEC. - APRIL) for protection of wintering big game during periods of severely inclement winter conditions, as determined by the Area Manager. Prior and existing rights and special permit excepted.
- C- A 2,000 to 5,000 acre non-motorized hunting area to be established within this unit would be designated seasonally LIMITED by closing roads and trails during big game hunting seasons (approx. 4 mos.). Special permit use excepted.
- D- Vehicles permanently restricted to existing roads and trails except for prior and existing rights or special permit.

## STANDARD OFF-ROAD VEHICLE DESIGNATION AREAS





## VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASSES



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

compaction/erosion, and vandalism to public and private property associated with the large number and concentrations of hunters. Intensive management as described under the Planned Actions section will focus management priority toward these heavily used areas and will upgrade the quality of the user experience and services that would otherwise continue to deteriorate due to resource degradation. In addition without intensive management, health hazards could increase to the point where access to these lands could be denied for resource and public safety protection.

Designation of a nonmotorized hunting area within the Cow Creek Unit of the Piceance Basin SRMA will enhance the hunting experience and will equalize opportunities for success.

An ORV Implementation Plan is required by BLM regulations.

Demand for water-oriented recreational activities within the White River Resource Area has never been met. Providing for more access on the White River would help meet this demand and would increase overall recreational opportunities.

Over the past 10 years, the scenic quality of the Piceance Basin has undergone a gradual change from an area dominated by ranching and recreation to one increasingly dominated by energy development such as oil and gas exploration and development and oil shale development. Visual design emphasis and the contrast rating concept will ensure maintenance of existing scenic values.

### 2.2.12.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

Additional activity level planning will be required in conjunction with completion of the ORV Implementation Plan, the Recreation Area Management Plan, and other planned actions.

Priority 1. Complete ORV Implementation Plan by end of FY 88.

Priority 2. Complete Recreation Area Management Plan by end of FY 92.

Priority 3. Develop and implement a road sign program.

Priority 4. Identify and develop public access along the White River to make available the water-based recreation resource.

Priority 5. Increase public information efforts, including the publication of a map showing roads, trails, information stations, campsites, and other recreation information of interest to the public.

### 2.2.12.5 Monitoring

Specific monitoring needs will be identified in the Recreation Area Management Plan and the ORV Implementation Plan.

### 2.2.12.6 Support

Cadastral survey support will be required to survey potential access and recreation sites along the White River.

## 2.2.13 Lands and Realty

### 2.2.13.1 Objectives

Provide for and authorize the use of public lands in compliance with existing laws, regulations, and BLM policy. Ensure that such approved use is not in conflict with lands specific to critical resource needs, their buffer zones, or protection of those areas.

### 2.2.13.2 Planned Actions

- Process and approve applications for use authorizations on a case-by-case basis. Situate locations and routes in an environmentally sound manner with emphasis given to previously disturbed sites and/or designated utility corridors. Use authorizations include the following:
  - Rights-of-way for access roads, pipelines, powerlines, utilities, railroads, etc.
  - Temporary use permits in conjunction with rights-of-way.
  - Leases, permits, and easements pursuant to Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.
- Locate major linear rights-of-way within designated utility corridors whenever possible. It is important to note that these decisions apply only to lands where the surface is managed by BLM. These corridors are shown on the RMP map at the back of this document and are described below:

Bar D Mesa-Blair Mesa—Starting in the middle of the basin, this corridor is located on the divide between Yellow and Piceance Creeks and heads north to the White River. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for liquid product, gas and electrical transmission lines use. Road transportation use would require an environmental review only in the northern portion of the corridor.



## CHAPTER 2

**Black Sulphur Creek**—Starts approximately in the middle of the basin and heads directly southeast along the Black Sulphur Creek drainage system. This corridor is designated for major pipelines, utility and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for electrical transmission line use.

**Calamity Ridge**—This corridor is located on the northwest edge of the basin and heads north to the White River following the Calamity Ridge Road. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for liquid product and gas pipeline use.

**Cathedral Bluffs**—Located on the west boundary of the basin, this corridor heads south from the Calamity Ridge corridor to the Roan Plateau corridor. This corridor is designated for major pipeline and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for liquid product and gas pipeline use.

**C-b**—This corridor is located between Piceance Creek and the north side of Tract C-b. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility and road transportation use.

**Collins Gulch**—This is a short corridor located north of C-b corridor and Piceance Creek and heads north up Collins Gulch toward Magnolia Camp. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility, and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for electrical transmission line use.

**Colony**—This corridor is located on the southeast rim of the basin and runs south from the Roan Plateau corridor to Parachute Creek. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for electrical transmission lines and road transportation use.

**Cottonwood Draw**—This is a short corridor connecting the northwest part of the open-pit mine area to the Calamity Ridge corridor. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, transmission line, and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for liquid product and gas transmission lines.

**Joe Bush Mountain**—Starts on the east side of the basin and heads southwest to Piceance Creek and the White River City-Rio Blanco corridor. This corridor is designated for major pipeline and utility transmission line use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for electrical transmission lines. Liquid product and gas transmission lines would need a detailed environmental review in the northern portion only.

**Kendall Point**—Heads northeast from Piceance Creek and the C-b corridor across Kendall Peak and north to the White River. This corridor is designated for electrical transmission line use.

**La Sal**—This corridor starts in the southeast portion of the basin connecting with the Roan Plateau and Colony corridors and heads north to Magnolia Camp, then west to the open-pit mine area and then northwest to the Calamity Ridge corridor. This corridor is designated for major liquid product and gas transmission lines.

**Little Hills**—This corridor is located in the northeast part of the basin and connects the White River City-Rio Blanco corridor in a northeast direction to the Rifle-Meeker corridor. This corridor is designated for major pipelines, utility and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for electrical transmission lines.

**Rangely-Meeker**—This corridor starts at the extreme northeast corner of the planning area in Powell Park and heads west toward Rangely paralleling the north boundary of the planning area along the White River and highway 64. This corridor is designated for major pipeline and utility line use.

**Rifle-Meeker**—This corridor heads south from Meeker along highway 13 on the east side of the basin toward Rifle. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility and road transportation use.

**Rifle-Roan Plateau**—Starting at the extreme southeast corner of the basin this corridor heads west along the Roan Plateau to the far southwest corner of the basin. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility and road transportation use. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for electrical, liquid product and gas transmission lines.

**White River City-Rio Blanco**—This corridor starts at approximately the junction of highway 64 and Rio Blanco County Road 5 and heads south to Magnolia Camp. From Magnolia Camp it heads southeast to Piceance Creek. This corridor is designated for major pipeline, utility and road transportation. A detailed environmental review would be necessary for electrical transmission lines and partially in the northern portion for liquid product and gas transmission lines and road transportation.

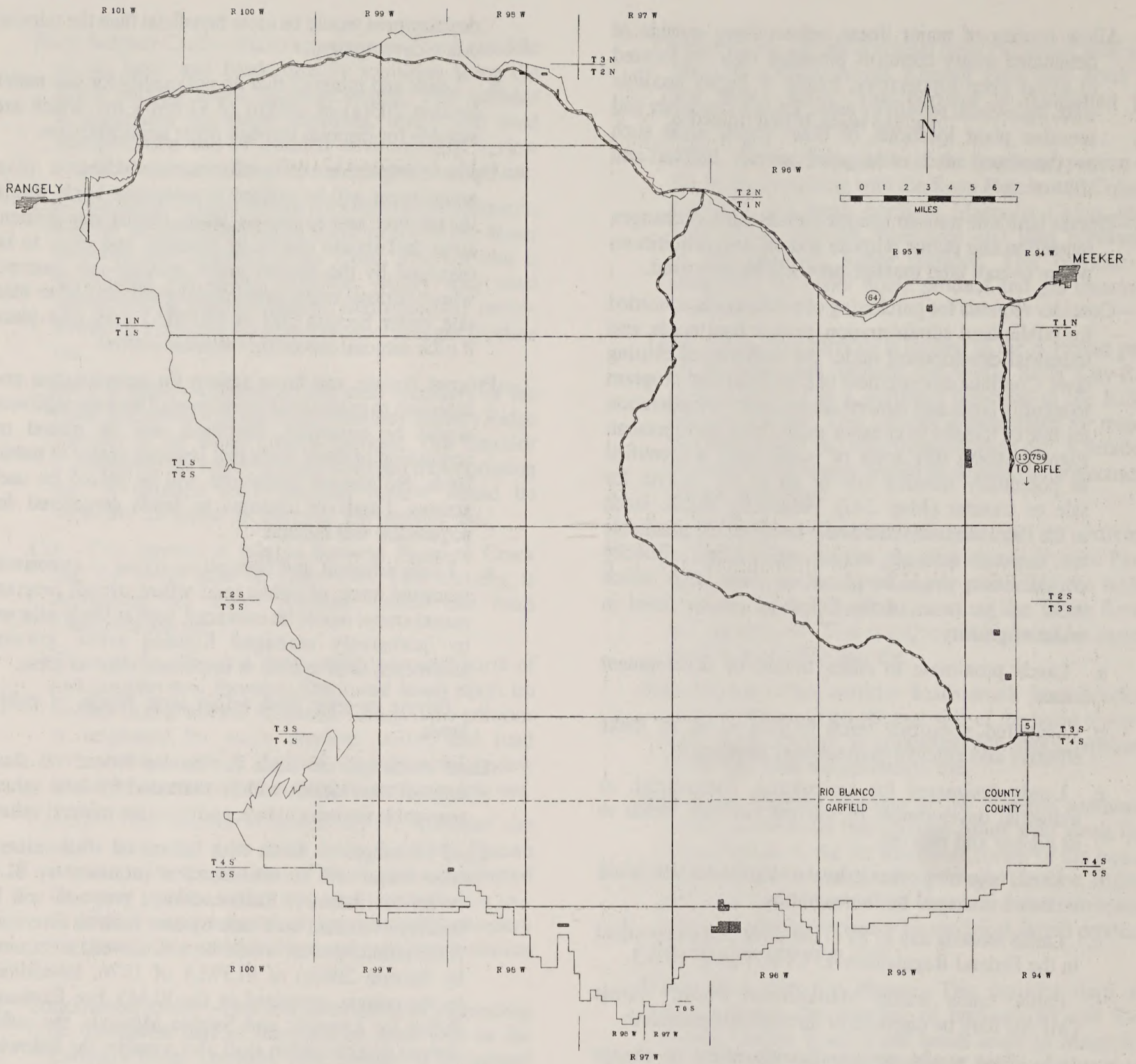
—Development proposals in portions of designated utility corridors within an ACEC or potential ACEC will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis with priority given to protection and preservation of the important plant populations present.




## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

- Allow routing of major linear rights-of-way outside of designated utility corridors provided they are located to avoid steep topography, fragile or highly erodible soils, high-visual sensitivity areas, known candidate and sensitive plant locations, or other fragile areas such as threatened and endangered species habitat and cultural sites.
- Process land title transfer actions such as sales, exchanges, recreation and public purpose actions, and acquisitions where overall land management will be improved.
- Consider requests for purchasing of public lands as needed for public land administration, private land needs, and industrial development under the authority of existing laws. Continue development of a land disposal program to identify lands and mineral resources for consideration for sale or transfer to enhance public land management. Eight hundred fifty acres of public land is identified as potentially meeting one or all of the criteria for sale or transfer (Map 2-G). Additional public lands in the Piceance Basin could only be identified as suitable for disposal through a plan amendment. Priority consideration would be placed on those lands which meet one or more of the following criteria listed in order of priority:
  - a. Lands proximate to cities, towns, or development areas.
  - b. Scattered nonurban tracts located so as to make effective and efficient management impractical.
  - c. Lands designated for agricultural, commercial, or industrial development by current land-use trends as its highest and best use.
  - d. Lands adjoining other federal or state lands that could be better managed by those entities.
  - e. Lands meeting any or all of the three criteria specified in the Federal Regulations 43 CFR, Part 2710.0-3.
  - f. Public lands within Management Priority Areas (MPAs) may be disposed of through sale provided:
    - 1. Sale would not significantly affect or change the levels of production or use as approved in the Resource Management Plan.
    - 2. Sale would not change resource conditions, goals, or objectives and the time required to meet the same.
    - 3. Sale would not result in a change in program constraints or practices described in the Resource Management Plan.
  - g. Mineral estates without economic mineral value and areas where federal mineral ownership would interfere with surface estate development and areas where development would be more beneficial than the mineral estate development.
- h. Lands and minerals that do not qualify for sale under Section 203(a) or 209(b) of FLPMA but which are suitable for disposal through other applicable law.
- Upon completion of preliminary studies, a plan amendment will be utilized to categorize lands within the resource area as disposal tracts, special management areas that should clearly be retained, and areas to be managed by the Bureau under multiple-use concepts where disposal under appropriate authority (other than sale under Section 203 of FLPMA) may take place if such disposal serves the National interest.
- Process, initiate, and favor actions for consolidation and easement to public land where overall land management would be improved. Emphasis will be placed on acquisition of those lands that improve access to public lands. No acreage limitations will be placed on such actions. Lands or interests to lands considered for acquisition will include:
  - a. Lands adjacent and controlling access to intensively managed tracts of public land where overall program management would be enhanced, such as lands adjacent to intensively managed hunting areas, grazing allotments, river access, or important mineral areas.
  - b. Private or state land within large blocks of public lands.
- Land exchanges on lands not having federal oil shale mineral reservations will be evaluated for land values, renewable resource values, and/or other mineral values.
- Land exchanges on lands with federal oil shale mineral reservations will be considered as proposed by BLM or private industry. Each exchange proposal will be initially evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the public interest would be well served, as required by Section 206(a) of FLPMA of 1976. In addition to the criteria contained in the BLM's Fee Exchange Policy for Leasable and Salable Minerals, the public interest determination shall also consider the following five items:
  - 1. Federal leasing that would be foregone as a result of private development on exchanged lands using up available carrying capacity.
  - 2. Loss of base lands for grazing permits as lands offered in exchange to BLM.
  - 3. The management of offered lands under BLM administration.
  - 4. The loss of authority to require implementation of mitigative measures and due diligence requirements on exchanged lands.





 Federal lands with potential for disposal

## FEDERAL LANDS IDENTIFIED AS POTENTIALLY SUITABLE FOR DISPOSAL



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

5. The real opportunity for future oil shale leasing and development on exchanged lands.

- Land exchange proposals containing oil shale or oil shale and associated mineral values, if determined to be in the public interest, will be based on a determination of equal value for both offered and selected lands. The equal value would be based on either: (1) a simple recoverable ton-for-ton or recoverable synthetic crude barrel-for-barrel, or (2) an adjusted resource for resource equivalent based on the criteria established in 43 CFR 2201.3(c).
- Oil shale land exchanges are subject to the same carrying capacity constraints (Table 2-A and discussion in Section 2.2.2) and locational constraints as oil shale leasing (i.e., no commercial exchanges in the multiminer zone as shown in Map 2-B and the Piceance Dome area).
- Community expansion sales or leases will be considered within a 5-mile radius of the corporate boundaries of the towns of Meeker and Rangely. If growth of existing communities increases too dramatically and it is determined by local officials that development is required outside the communities, Rio Blanco and White River City should be considered as logical sites. Development on existing federal energy and mineral leases will have priority over community expansions. All community expansion sales or leases will be restricted as necessary to protect other resources as identified on a case-by-case basis.

### 2.2.13.3 Rationale

All planned actions are in line with existing laws, regulations, and BLM policy. In addition, designation of the major utility corridors within the planning area is in compliance with consideration of designation criteria set forth in Section 503 of FLPMA, 43 CFR 2806.2 and in BLM Manual Section 2801.11.

### 2.2.13.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

None are identified.

### 2.2.13.5 Monitoring

Individual land-use authorizations will be monitored, as deemed necessary, on a case-by-case basis to ensure compliance with planned actions and applied mitigation.

### 2.2.13.6 Support

None identified.

## 2.2.14 Transportation

Criteria for transportation management are outlined in the following:

- BLM Manual Section 9112 (Bridges and Culverts) and Section 9113 (Roads).
- Craig District Transportation Plan.
- White River Resource Area Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA.
- Surface Operating Standards for Oil and Gas Development.
- Site-specific stipulations developed through right-of-way applications, Applications for Permit to Drill, and exploration/mining plans.

The following management actions will occur:

- Provide access and product transportation as demand occurs.
- Update the District Transportation Plan (secondary roads) to plan for the needs of the Piceance Basin.
- Abandon and reclaim unnecessary roads.
- Coordination with state and county road development will be facilitated through Memoranda of Understanding or Cooperative Agreements.
- Facilitate maintenance and improvement of existing state and county (primary) roadways by making the public lands available for mineral material resources.
- Request submission of a 5-year plan of development from new lessees in order to consolidate transportation needs and in an effort to identify and mitigate the cumulative impacts of access roads and pipelines.
- Encourage the location of new access roads, pipelines, transmission lines, and other transportation needs in designated right-of-way corridors. These corridors are shown on the RMP map and are described in the previous Lands and Realty section.

## 2.2.15 Fire Management

The management objective is to prepare and implement a Fire Management Plan. This plan will provide the guidance required for proper management of wildfires in the Piceance



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Basin Planning Area. It will permit the option of immediate suppression in areas requiring protection from wildfire or allow fires to burn naturally in areas where desired resource benefits will occur. Wildfire control measures will be developed and recommended for implementation in each fire management area. Prescribed burn policies and planned accomplishments will continue as approved in the White River Resource Area Management Framework Plan.

### 2.2.16 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

#### 2.2.16.1 Objectives

To designate and protect identified areas that contain important historic, cultural, scenic, and natural values or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards, pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 and BLM regulations at 43 CFR 1610.

#### 2.2.16.2 Planned Actions

Five areas are designated as ACECs (RMP map). These areas are listed by name, important value, and acres. Any specific resource use limitations are listed for each site.

1. Deer Gulch—rare plants and unique hydrologic/geologic system—1,809 acres.

##### Resource Use Limitations

An area containing *Festuca dasyclada* will be fenced as part of an ongoing monitoring plan.

2. Dudley Bluffs—rare plants—1,620 acres.
3. Lower Greasewood Creek—rare plants—203 acres.
4. South Cathedral Bluffs—rare plants—316 acres.

##### Resource Use Limitations

Select plant populations will be fenced to ensure protection of important habitats from livestock trailing and grazing. Proposals involving development in the designated Cathedral Bluffs Utility Corridor within the ACEC will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis with priority given to protection and preservation of the important plant populations present.

5. Yanks Gulch/Upper Greasewood Creek—rare plants—2,687 acres.

The following resource use limitations are common to all five ACECs and to the two potential ACECs. Any additional specific limitations are listed above by site.

- a. All uses, improvements, and surface-disturbing activities that are not consistent with the purpose of the ACEC and would affect the important values and quality of the ACEC will be excluded, with the exception of unmitigatable valid existing rights.
  - b. An ACEC activity plan to specifically address detailed management and monitoring necessary on the ACEC, consistent with the purpose of designation, will be developed.
  - c. Vehicles will be permanently restricted to existing roads and trails except for prior and existing rights or special permit. Permanent closures may be applied to part or all of an ACEC as the result of detailed analysis in ACEC activity plans.
  - d. Grazing allotment management plans (AMPs) will be developed or revised in concurrence with the ACEC activity plan to ensure maintenance of significant elements in each area.
  - e. A no surface occupancy (NSO) stipulation will be applied to selected important plant populations and vegetation association occurrences on new mineral leases (Table 2-B). Approval of development plans on existing leases (i.e., Applications for Permit to Drill, Sundry Notices, rights-of-way, etc.) will require mitigation of impacts to these resources to the extent such mitigation does not unduly hinder or preclude the exercise of valid existing rights.
  - f. Important values within the areas will be protected from surface disturbing activities to the extent such protection does not unduly hinder or preclude the exercise of valid existing rights.
  - g. No harvest of forest products will be allowed.
- The Soldier Creek area will be designated as an ACEC if the State of Colorado designates their adjoining acreage.
- The School Gulch area will be designated as an ACEC if ongoing monitoring indicates the important values present require designation and special management attention in order to ensure their protection and perpetuation.
- Pending a state decision on Soldier Creek and ongoing monitoring on School Gulch, these two areas will be managed under interim management policy guidelines for ACECs. Formal resource use decisions (i.e., to allow or disallow certain uses) will not be made on the two potential ACECs, with the exception of limiting off-road vehicle use to existing roads and trails. These areas will be provided protection on a case-by-case basis to the extent such protection does not unduly hinder or preclude the exercise of valid existing rights. Protection will include all feasible actions available to



TABLE 2-B

IMPORTANT ACEC PLANT SPECIES/ASSOCIATIONS TO RECEIVE NSO PROTECTION <sup>1</sup>

ACEC	PLANT SPECIES/ASSOCIATION	ACRES <sup>2</sup>
Deer Gulch	1. <i>Festuca dasyclada</i>	440
	2. <i>Agropyron spicatum</i> var <i>inerme</i> - <i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>	40
Dudley Bluffs	1. <i>Physaria obcordata</i>	280
	2. <i>Lesquerella congesta</i>	40
	3. <i>Atriplex confertifolia</i> / <i>Agropyron spicatum</i> var <i>inerme</i> - <i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>	40
	4. <i>Atriplex confertifolia</i> / <i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>	40
	5. <i>Juniperus osteosperma</i> - <i>Pinus edulis</i> / <i>Agropyron spicatum</i> var. <i>inerme</i>	80
Lower Greasewood Creek	1. <i>Gilia stenothyrsa</i>	40
	2. <i>Juniperus osteosperma</i> - <i>Pinus edulis</i> / <i>Artemisia nova</i> / <i>Agropyron spicatum</i> var. <i>inerme</i>	80
South Cathedral Bluffs	1. <i>Thalictrum heliophilum</i>	280
	2. <i>Lesquerella parviflora</i>	80
	3. <i>Gentianella tortuosa</i>	40
Yanks Gulch/ Upper Greasewood Creek	1. <i>Physaria obcordata</i>	40
	2. <i>Pinus edulis</i> / <i>Amelanchier utahensis</i> - <i>Arctostaphylos patula</i> - <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i> / <i>Carex pityophila</i>	560
	3. <i>Juniperus osteosperma</i> - <i>Pinus edulis</i> / <i>Amelanchier utahensis</i> - <i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>	120
	4. <i>Artemisia tridentata</i> spp. <i>wyomingensis</i> - <i>Symphoricarpos oreophilus</i> / <i>Elymus cinereus</i>	120
	5. <i>Elymus cinereus</i>	200

<sup>1</sup> Selected high priority remnant vegetation associations outside of the ACECs to receive NSO protection will be determined in consultation and coordination with the Colorado Natural Areas Program.

<sup>2</sup> These acreage figures were calculated based upon a 40-acre minimum leasing restriction parcel size, as required by the Colorado State Office. The actual area upon which the NSO will be enforced is much less than these acreage figures represent, and will only include the actual delineated location of the plant population/occurrence.



## CHAPTER 2

ensure that those qualities/important resources present are not damaged or otherwise subjected to adverse changes pending possible designation. Management of the important plant values within these two areas will essentially occur according to planned actions described in Section 2.2.10 - Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations.

—Twelve initially identified areas will not be designated as ACECs.

### 2.2.16.3 Rationale

—The five areas that are designated as ACECs all meet the required identification criteria of relevance and importance pursuant to federal regulation 43 CFR 1610.7-2(a) and BLM Manual Section 1617.8(c). All of these areas contain important ecological values (rare plants) which require special management protection in order to ensure their protection.

—Designation of only that portion of the Soldier Creek area on BLM lands will not, by itself, ensure protection and perpetuation of the important plant values contained within the entire initially identified area.

—Although important plant values are present on the School Gulch area, these values are not faced with known existing or potential future threats. As such, special management attention and designation is not required or necessary.

—The twelve areas dropped from further consideration as ACECs do not meet the required identification criteria of relevance and importance.

### 2.2.16.4 Implementation Needs/Priorities

The five ACEC designations become effective upon approval of this plan. ACEC activity plans will be prepared to more specifically guide protection and management of important resources located at each of the designated sites. Since all of the five are being designated based upon important plant values, the range and wildlife programs will be primarily responsible for initiation and preparation of these activity plans. Priority for activity plan preparation is:

Priority 1. South Cathedral Bluffs ACEC

Priority 2. Dudley Bluffs ACEC

Priority 3. Deer Gulch ACEC

Priority 4. Yanks Gulch/Upper Greasewood Creek ACEC

Priority 5. Lower Greasewood Creek ACEC

All project proposals and land-use applications will be analyzed to ensure they do not conflict with the designated or potential ACECs. Resource use limitations for the sites will be strictly adhered to, as will the detailed management prescriptions upon completion of specific ACEC activity plans.

In order to ensure protection and maintenance of the ACECs, the White River Resource Area Oil and Gas Leasing Umbrella EA will need to be updated to include those critical plant populations/occurrences to receive NSO protection and to include the entire ACEC locations for a case-by-case review.

### 2.2.16.5 Monitoring

Ongoing monitoring will continue to ensure maintenance of the important plant values contained within the designated and potential ACECs. Additional monitoring may be necessary as determined through development of specific activity plans. Data obtained from monitoring studies shall be used in verifying the effectiveness of 1) resource use limitations identified in this RMP, 2) any additional management measures developed as a result of activity planning, and 3) to develop future management recommendations.

### 2.2.16.6 Support

Support will be required from resources specialists to prepare and review activity plans.

## 2.3 Management Priority Area Decisions

### 2.3.1 Introduction

This section describes management decisions for geographic zones of land called management priority areas (MPAs). MPAs are geographic zones that are unique, significant, or particularly suited for development, management, protection, or use of a particular resource. These MPAs are delineated on the RMP map found at the end of this document. The management ascribed to the MPAs provides the basis for management presented in Section 2.2, Resource Use Decisions. This section and the RMP map must be used in conjunction with the management actions described by resource in Section 2.2 for a complete understanding as to how management will occur in the Piceance Basin.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

It is important to note that as with any zoning process, the lands will not be managed exclusively for the priority resource, but for other compatible uses as well. The compatibility of managing more than one resource in each priority area is the essence of multiple-use management. Therefore, it is critical to understand the priority areas assigned to each resource and the compatibility of other resource values within those priority areas. Management emphasis on a particular MPA will be directed toward that resource for which the priority area was established. Management of fully compatible resources or uses can proceed without restriction. Resources or uses compatible if stipulations are imposed will be allowed based upon management practices and mitigation described in Section 2.2, Resource Use Decisions. In most situations, such implementation will proceed without violation of the priority area objective. Significant conflicts will usually be resolved in favor of the priority area objective.

Table 2-C shows the size of each of the management priority areas described below prior to the conflict resolution process and the resulting size of each management priority area after conflict resolution. In addition, the table indicates the percent of all BLM administered lands within the planning area covered by each management priority area both before and after conflict resolution. This table does not show compatibility, only management priority. Refer to the following decisions on MPAs for a description of compatible and excluded uses.

As a result of internal review, cultural resource MPAs have been deleted from the RMP. The reason for this is that federal regulations already require that priority management consideration be given to cultural resources on all land use actions authorized or proposed by BLM (36 CFR VIII 800); therefore, MPAs for cultural resources are redundant and unnecessary. Significant cultural resource sites which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places are included in Mandatory Protection Area MPAs.

**IMPORTANT NOTES: MPAs are shown on the RMP map for those lands where BLM has either surface ownership, mineral ownership, or both. However, it is important to understand that MPA depictions on the RMP map and MPA decisions contained within this section apply only to those rights on the land for which BLM has administrative authority. As an example, if the RMP map depicts a surface resource MPA for a certain area, and a portion of the lands in this area are lands on which BLM only has subsurface mineral ownership, surface management decisions relative to non-BLM surface lands within the MPA are not within BLM's authority and, therefore, do not apply. In such a case, only the decisions pertinent to the specific subsurface federal mineral resource present would apply. MPA decisions on split estate lands are not intended to interfere with the rights of surface owners.**

Approximately 74,381 acres of public land within the Piceance Basin Planning Area has recently been, or will soon be, patented as a result of the *Tosco v. Hodel* oil shale placer claims agreement. These lands are shown on Map 2-H. MPA depictions shown on the RMP map found at the back of this document and any applicable decisions within this section of the plan do not apply on these lands. Per the *Tosco v. Hodel* agreement, BLM will retain full title to the oil, gas, and coal minerals present within these lands. Development of existing oil and gas leases, and new leasing and subsequent development will occur according to the terms of the referenced agreement.

### 2.3.2 Mandatory Protection Areas

These are areas of important wildlife habitat and cultural resource values where special management is required by laws and regulations. No surface occupancy (NSO) stipulations will be enforced on crucial raptor habitats and the Duck Creek Wickiup site, which is currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Seasonal restrictions will be placed on bald eagle important use areas and raptor buffer zones. Other resource uses will be allowed, provided they do not significantly interfere with these important resource values.

#### 2.3.2.1 Wildlife

Wildlife use will be permitted. Limitations will be applied on wildlife management actions or projects occurring in the areas.

#### 2.3.2.2 Recreation

Development of recreational sites will be allowed except where they conflict with the mandatory protection areas.

#### 2.3.2.3 Visual

Sensitive visual areas will be protected and are fully compatible with mandatory protection areas.

#### 2.3.2.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Limitations may be applied on actions or projects occurring in priority areas.



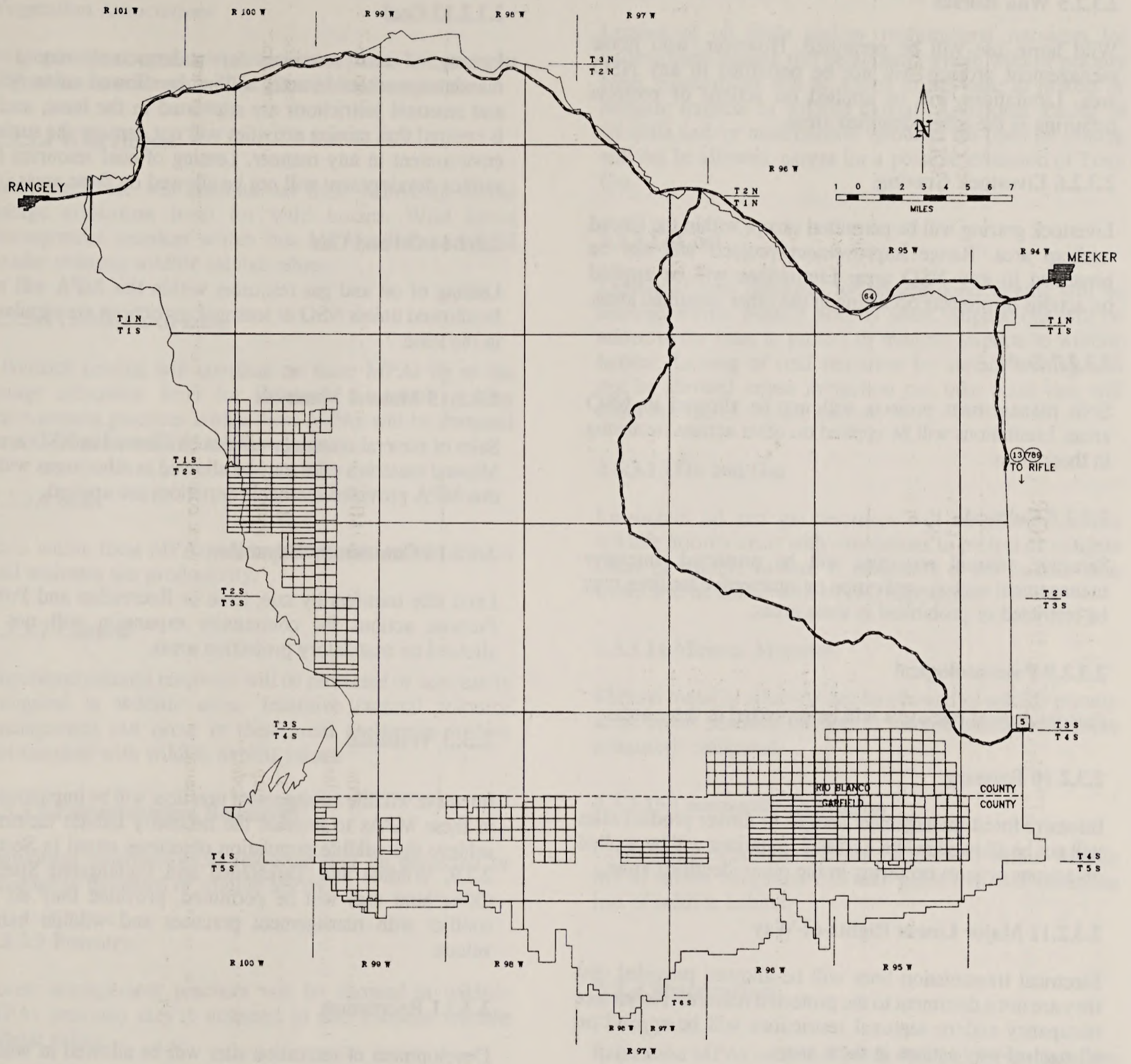
TABLE 2-C  
RMP MANAGEMENT PRIORITY AREAS

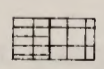
MANAGEMENT PRIORITY AREA	BEFORE CONFLICT RESOLUTION		AFTER CONFLICT RESOLUTION	
	ACRES	PERCENT	ACRES	PERCENT
Mandatory Protection	24,295	3.0	15,980	2.4
Wildlife	203,378	25.3	72,668	10.8
Recreation	23,847	3.0	3,730	0.6
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	6,635	0.8	6,525	1.0
Visual	51,292	6.4	4,023	0.6
Wild Horses	102,452	12.7	35,700	5.3
Livestock Grazing	804,580	100.0	132,798	19.7
Soils	66,900	8.3	16,485	2.4
Forestry	272,408	33.9	49,303	7.3
Oil Shale (Open Pit)	44,802	5.6	30,488	4.5
Oil Shale (Underground)	362,977	45.1	200,478	29.8
Coal (Underground Only)	30,195	3.8	5,810	0.9
Coal (Surface and/or Underground)	24,870	3.1	7,598	1.1
Oil and Gas	93,860	11.7	85,310	12.6
Community Expansion	13,455	1.7	3,595	0.5
No Management Priority	603	0.1	603	0.1
Potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	3,453	0.4	3,453	0.5

NOTES

1. "Before Conflict Resolution" means the size of the Management Priority Area (MPA) before overlying with other MPAs in the conflict resolution process. Acreage and percent figures apply to all lands in the planning area.
2. "After Conflict Resolution" refers to the final size of each MPA after overlying with other MPAs in the conflict resolution process. These are the areas of each MPA shown on the RMP map. Acreage and percent figures apply to BLM-administered lands in the planning area, including the recently patented oil shale lands (*Tosco v. Hodel* agreement).
3. This table does not show compatibility, only management priority. For resource compatibility, please see the descriptions of Management Priority Areas on the following pages.





 PATENTED OIL SHALE MINING CLAIMS  
(AS A RESULT OF TOSCO V. HODEL AGREEMENT)

## RECENTLY PATENTED OIL SHALE MINING CLAIMS



## CHAPTER 2

### 2.3.2.5 Wild Horses

Wild horse use will be permitted. However, wild horse management projects will not be permitted in any NSO area. Limitations will be applied on actions or projects occurring in the other identified areas.

### 2.3.2.6 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing will be permitted except within the fenced wickiup area. Range improvement projects will not be permitted in any NSO area. Limitations will be applied on actions or projects occurring in the other identified areas.

### 2.3.2.7 Soils

Soils management projects will not be allowed in NSO areas. Limitations will be applied on other actions occurring in these areas.

### 2.3.2.8 Cultural

Sensitive cultural resources will be protected. Intensive management such as excavation or interpretive facilities may be restricted or prohibited in these areas.

### 2.3.2.9 Paleontological

Paleontological resources will be protected in these areas.

### 2.3.2.10 Forestry

Intensive forest management actions or timber product sales will not be allowed in NSO areas. Limitations will be applied on actions or sales occurring in the other identified areas.

### 2.3.2.11 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Electrical transmission lines will be allowed provided that they are not a detriment to the protected resource. No surface occupancy and/or seasonal restrictions will be applied on all right-of-way actions in these areas.

### 2.3.2.12 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources on mandatory protection areas for underground mining will not be allowed unless NSO and seasonal restrictions, as pertinent, are stipulated in the lease, and it is ensured that mining activities will not damage the surface environment in any manner. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open pit development will not be allowed in these areas.

### 2.3.2.13 Coal

Leasing of coal resources for underground mining on mandatory protection areas will not be allowed unless NSO and seasonal restrictions are stipulated in the lease, and it is ensured that mining activities will not damage the surface environment in any manner. Leasing of coal resources for surface development will not be allowed on these areas.

### 2.3.2.14 Oil and Gas

Leasing of oil and gas resources within this MPA will not be allowed unless NSO or seasonal restrictions are stipulated in the lease.

### 2.3.2.15 Mineral Materials

Sales of mineral materials will not be allowed in NSO areas. Mineral materials sales may be allowed in other areas within this MPA provided seasonal restrictions are applied.

### 2.3.2.16 Community Expansion

Land title transfers by sale, lease or Recreation and Public Purpose actions for community expansion will not be allowed on mandatory protection areas.

## 2.3.3 Wildlife

Intensive wildlife management practices will be implemented in these MPAs to provide the necessary habitat factors to achieve the wildlife population objectives stated in Section 2.2.9, Wildlife and Threatened and Endangered Species. Other land uses will be permitted, provided they do not conflict with management practices and wildlife habitat values.

### 2.3.3.1 Recreation

Development of recreation sites will be allowed in wildlife MPAs, provided they do not interfere with wildlife habitat values.

### 2.3.3.2 Visual

Visually sensitive areas will be protected in these areas and are fully compatible.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.3.3.3 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management of candidate and sensitive plants and remnant vegetation associations will be allowed on these areas.

### 2.3.3.4 Wild Horses

Wild horse use will continue on these MPAs up to the forage allocation level for wild horses. Wild horse management practices within this MPA will be designed to also enhance wildlife habitat values.

### 2.3.3.5 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing will continue on these MPAs up to the forage allocation level for livestock. Livestock grazing management practices within these MPAs will be designed to also enhance wildlife habitat values.

### 2.3.3.6 Soils

Soils within these MPAs will be managed to reduce erosion and maintain site productivity.

### 2.3.3.7 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in wildlife areas. Intensive cultural resource management can occur in these areas as long as it does not interfere with wildlife habitat values.

### 2.3.3.8 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in wildlife MPAs.

### 2.3.3.9 Forestry

Forest management practices will be allowed in wildlife MPAs provided they're designed to also enhance wildlife habitat values.

### 2.3.3.10 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Permitting of major transmission and transportation rights-of-way will be allowed with stipulations to mitigate for the loss of wildlife habitat. In areas where mitigation is not practical, the corridor will be rerouted if possible or not allowed.

### 2.3.3.11 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining will be allowed within wildlife priority areas. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to wildlife habitat. Additional leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open pit mining will not be allowed, except for a possible extension of Tract C-a.

### 2.3.3.12 Coal

Leasing of coal resources for underground mining will be allowed within wildlife priority areas. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to wildlife habitat. Leasing of coal resources for surface mining will not be allowed unless mitigation can take place that will offset the loss of wildlife habitat.

### 2.3.3.13 Oil and Gas

Leasing of oil and gas resources will be allowed within wildlife priority areas with stipulations to protect or mitigate losses of wildlife habitat. If mitigation is not feasible then leases will be issued with a NSO stipulation.

### 2.3.3.14 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will not be allowed in wildlife priority areas unless potential impacts to wildlife habitat/values are adequately mitigated.

### 2.3.3.15 Community Expansion

Community expansion will not be allowed within wildlife MPAs unless mitigation can take place that will offset the loss of wildlife habitat.

## 2.3.4 Recreation

Recreation MPAs consist of public lands along major access routes, along the White River, and along hunter camp concentration areas. These areas will be actively managed for the safety and convenience of the public. Other uses will be allowed in these areas as long as they do not interfere with recreation management objectives.

### 2.3.4.1 Wildlife

Management of the wildlife resource is fully compatible with recreation management practices and objectives.



## CHAPTER 2

### 2.3.4.2 Visual

Visual resources will be protected in recreation MPAs.

### 2.3.4.3 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management practices will be allowed within recreation MPAs.

### 2.3.4.4 Wild Horses

Management of this resource is fully compatible with recreation management practices and objectives.

### 2.3.4.5 Livestock Grazing

Management of this resource is fully compatible with recreation management practices and objectives.

### 2.3.4.6 Soils

Management of this resource is fully compatible with recreation management practices and objectives.

### 2.3.4.7 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in recreation MPAs. In some cases, cultural sites may be managed for their interpretive value.

### 2.3.4.8 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in recreation MPAs.

### 2.3.4.9 Forestry

Forest management practices will be allowed in recreation MPAs. Certain practices may be limited to protect recreation values.

### 2.3.4.10 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Major utility and transportation rights-of-way will be allowed within recreation MPAs as long as visual contrast rating requirements are met and impacts to recreation values are adequately mitigated. Potential recreation sites will be avoided by major right-of-ways.

### 2.3.4.11 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining in recreation MPAs will be allowed with stipulations of NSO to protect the surface environment. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources by open pit mining will not be allowed in these areas.

### 2.3.4.12 Coal

Leasing of coal resources for underground mining will be allowed within this priority area. No surface occupancy stipulations will be added to leases to protect future identified recreation sites. Leasing of coal resources for surface mining will not be allowed within the recreation priority area unless stipulations are implemented to adequately mitigate impacts.

### 2.3.4.13 Oil and Gas

Leasing of oil and gas resources will be allowed with stipulations to restrict development during seasons coinciding with recreation use. Reclamation will emphasize and support recreation use if necessary.

### 2.3.4.14 Community Expansion

Land title transfers by sale or Recreation and Public Purpose actions will be allowed if the community expansion type use benefits the purpose of the recreation priority area. Community expansion for business, industrial development, housing and sanitary landfills will not be allowed.

### 2.3.4.15 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will not be allowed in recreation MPAs unless stipulations are added to protect recreation values.

## 2.3.5 Visual

Visual MPAs contain lands identified as Class II in the visual resource inventory on file in the White River Resource Area Office. These are areas of special concern because of their inherent scenic values and/or sensitivity because of their location along major travel routes. Protection and maintenance of visual quality will be achieved through the imposition of restrictions on other resource uses or activities to reduce the degree of contrast with the surrounding landscape.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.3.5.1 Wildlife

Wildlife management practices will be allowed in visual MPAs subject to meeting contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.5.2 Recreation

Development of recreation sites in visual MPAs will be allowed subject to meeting contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.5.3 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management of this resource is fully compatible with visual resource management practices.

### 2.3.5.4 Wild Horses

Wild horse management practices will be allowed within visual MPAs, provided they meet contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.5.5 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing and range management practices will be allowed within visual MPAs, provided they meet contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.5.6 Soils

Management of this resource is fully compatible with visual resource management practices.

### 2.3.5.7 Cultural

Management of cultural resources will be allowed in visual MPAs. Any excavation or site interpretation will be subject to meeting contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.5.8 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in visual MPAs.

### 2.3.5.9 Forestry

Forest management practices will be allowed in visual MPAs. Certain practices will be limited to facilitate contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.5.10 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Permitting of transmission lines, pipelines, and transportation roads in visual MPAs will be allowed if contrast rating requirements can be met.

### 2.3.5.11 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining will be allowed within the visual priority area. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to visual resources. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open pit mining will be restricted in those areas of high visual quality.

### 2.3.5.12 Coal

Leasing of coal resources for underground mining will be allowed within the visual resource priority area. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to visual resources. Leasing of coal resources for surface mining will be restricted in areas of high visual quality.

### 2.3.5.13 Oil and Gas

Leasing of lands for oil and gas development will be allowed in visual MPAs subject to meeting contrast rating requirements at the development plan approval stage.

### 2.3.5.14 Community Expansion

Use of public lands for open space and parks will be allowed within visual MPAs.

### 2.3.5.15 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will be restricted in those areas of high visual quality.

## 2.3.6 Wild Horses

Management priority areas designated for wild horses will be committed to managing the area to provide the necessary habitat to support a wild horse herd as identified in the Wild Horse Herd Management Area Plan. Other resource uses will be allowed, provided they do not interfere with wild horse use or management practices.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2.3.6.1 Wildlife**

Wildlife habitat maintenance and improvement will be allowed within wild horse MPAs, provided that conflicts with wild horses do not occur.

### **2.3.6.2 Recreation**

Recreation activities will be allowed within wild horse MPAs, provided they do not interfere with wild horse management.

### **2.3.6.3 Visual**

Visual resources will be protected in wild horse MPAs.

### **2.3.6.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations**

Management of candidate and sensitive plant species and remnant vegetation associations will be allowed within wild horse MPAs.

### **2.3.6.5 Livestock Grazing**

Livestock grazing will continue within wild horse MPAs up to the forage allocation level for livestock. Livestock management and range improvement practices will be designed to benefit wild horses in these areas.

### **2.3.6.6 Soils**

Soils will be managed in wild horse MPAs to reduce erosion and maintain site productivity.

### **2.3.6.7 Cultural**

Management of cultural resources will be allowed within wild horse MPAs.

### **2.3.6.8 Paleontological Resources**

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in wild horse MPAs.

### **2.3.6.9 Forestry**

Forest management practices will be allowed within wild horse MPAs. Limits may be required on certain management practices to protect wild horse use.

### **2.3.6.10 Utility Corridors**

Permitting of major transmission and transportation rights-of-way within wild horse MPAs will be allowed with stipulations to mitigate the loss of wild horse range.

### **2.3.6.11 Oil Shale**

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining will be allowed within wild horse MPAs. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to the wild horse range. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open pit mining will not be allowed.

### **2.3.6.12 Coal**

Leasing of coal resources for underground mining will be allowed. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to the wild horse range. Leasing of coal resources for surface mining will not be allowed.

### **2.3.6.13 Oil and Gas**

Leasing of oil and gas resources will be allowed within the wild horse priority area with stipulations to protect or mitigate the loss of wild horse range.

### **2.3.6.14 Mineral Materials**

Mineral material sales will not be allowed within wild horse MPAs unless stipulations are incorporated to protect or mitigate the loss of wild horse range.

## **2.3.7 Livestock Grazing**

Livestock grazing MPAs will be committed to the production of livestock forage and grazing of livestock. Grazing and range management will be the priority use in these areas where an allotment management plan (AMP) has been or will be written and is currently being or will be implemented. Other resource uses will be allowed, provided they do not significantly interfere with livestock grazing or range management practices.

### **2.3.7.1 Wildlife**

Wildlife habitat management practices will be allowed within livestock MPAs, provided that conflicts with livestock grazing or range management practices do not occur.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.3.7.2 Recreation

Development of recreation sites will be allowed in livestock MPAs as long as it does not interfere with livestock grazing or range management.

### 2.3.7.3 Visual

Protection will be provided for visually sensitive areas in livestock MPAs.

### 2.3.7.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management of candidate and sensitive plant species and remnant vegetation associations will be allowed in livestock MPAs.

### 2.3.7.5 Wild Horses

Wild horse use will continue on livestock MPAs, provided competition with livestock above existing forage allocation levels does not occur. If wild horse numbers exceed allocated forage they can be removed. Until the excess wild horses are removed, they will receive priority over livestock in forage available. Wild horse range improvement practices will be designed to benefit livestock also.

### 2.3.7.6 Soils

Soils will be managed within livestock MPAs to reduce erosion and maintain site productivity.

### 2.3.7.7 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be protected or adequately mitigated within livestock MPAs. More extensive cultural resource management can occur within these areas to the extent that it does not interfere with livestock grazing or range management.

### 2.3.7.8 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in livestock MPAs.

### 2.3.7.9 Forestry

Forest management practices will be allowed in livestock MPAs. Limits may be required on certain management practices to protect livestock grazing use.

### 2.3.7.10 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Permitting of major transmission and transportation rights-of-way will be allowed within livestock MPAs with stipulations to mitigate the loss of livestock range.

### 2.3.7.11 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining will be allowed within livestock MPAs. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to the livestock range. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open-pit mining will not be allowed in livestock grazing priority use lands unless mitigation can be applied to compensate for the loss of grazing lands during mining activities.

### 2.3.7.12 Coal

Leasing of coal for underground mining will be allowed within livestock MPAs. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to the livestock range. Leasing of coal resources for coal surface mining will not be allowed in livestock grazing priority use lands unless mitigation can be applied to compensate for the loss of grazing lands during mining activities.

### 2.3.7.13 Oil and Gas

Leasing of oil and gas resources will be allowed within the livestock grazing priority area with stipulations to protect or mitigate the loss of forage.

### 2.3.7.14 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will not be allowed in livestock priority use lands unless adequately mitigated to prevent impacts to the priority livestock use.

## 2.3.8 Soils

Soil MPAs are locations of extremely fragile soils. Surface disturbing activities and vegetation manipulations should not occur on these soil types because of the potential for increasing soil erosion and decreasing site productivity. Stabilization of soil conditions and reduction of soil loss will be a priority for these areas. This will be accomplished through watershed improvement practices, management practices by other activities that promote soil stability, and avoidance of surface-disturbing activities. Other uses will be allowed to the extent that they do not cause increased soil loss or erosion.



## CHAPTER 2

### 2.3.8.1 Wildlife

Management practices and habitat improvement projects within soil MPAs will be designed to promote soil stability.

### 2.3.8.2 Recreation

Most recreation use will be allowed in soil MPAs. Some seasonal or temporary restrictions will be placed on ORV use.

### 2.3.8.3 Visual

Visually sensitive areas will be protected within soil MPAs.

### 2.3.8.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management practices are fully compatible with soil management priority area objectives.

### 2.3.8.5 Wild Horses

Wild horse management practices and habitat improvement projects within soil MPAs will be designed to reduce soil erosion and promote soil stability.

### 2.3.8.6 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing and range management will be allowed in these priority areas. Emphasis will be placed on range management practices that promote soil stability.

### 2.3.8.7 Cultural

Significant cultural sites will be protected or adequately mitigated within soil MPAs.

### 2.3.8.8 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in soil MPAs.

### 2.3.8.9 Forestry

Timber harvest on fragile soils will be restricted. Management practices to promote soil stability and reduce soil erosion will be incorporated into forestry actions within soil MPAs.

### 2.3.8.10 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining will be allowed within soil MPAs. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to fragile soils. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open-pit mining will not be allowed within soil management priority lands unless stipulations are implemented to adequately mitigate impacts.

### 2.3.8.11 Coal

Leasing of coal resources for underground mining will be allowed within soil MPAs. Stipulations will be added to the lease to protect or mitigate impacts to fragile soils. Leasing of coal minerals for surface mining will not be allowed within soil management priority lands unless stipulations are implemented to adequately mitigate impacts.

### 2.3.8.12 Oil and Gas

Leasing of oil and gas resources will be allowed within soil MPAs with stipulations to protect or mitigate the use of fragile soils.

### 2.3.8.13 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Lands of fragile or productive soils will not be available for rights-of-way permitting unless stipulations are implemented to adequately mitigate impacts.

### 2.3.8.14 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will not be allowed on fragile soils unless stipulations are implemented to adequately mitigate impacts.

## 2.3.9 Forestry

These areas will be committed to the growth and harvest of forest products. Objectives for forest MPAs will be to manage, in perpetuity, Douglas fir stands and pinyon-juniper woodlands for a sustained annual yield. Other resource uses within these areas will be allowed, provided they do not conflict with the intensive management of these lands for forest products.

### 2.3.9.1 Wildlife

Habitat management practices will be allowed to maintain or improve habitat conditions on forestry MPAs. Limits



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

will be placed on any wildlife action that potentially conflicts with growth, management or harvest of forest products.

### 2.3.9.2 Recreation

Development of recreation sites will be allowed on forestry MPAs as long as they do not interfere with forest management.

### 2.3.9.3 Visual

Visually sensitive areas will be protected through limits placed on intensive forest management.

### 2.3.9.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Candidate and sensitive plant and remnant vegetation association management practices will be allowed within forestry MPAs.

### 2.3.9.5 Wild Horses

Limits will be placed on management practices that might conflict with growth, management or harvest of forest products within forestry MPAs. Stipulations will be incorporated on forest product sales to avoid or mitigate the loss of wild horse range.

### 2.3.9.6 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing and range management practices will be allowed within forestry MPAs. Limits will be placed on grazing management practices that could conflict with growth, management or harvest of forest products.

### 2.3.9.7 Soils

Soils will be managed to reduce soil erosion and maintain site productivity on forestry MPAs.

### 2.3.9.8 Cultural

Significant cultural sites will be protected or adequately mitigated on forestry MPAs. Intensive management of cultural resources can occur if it does not interfere with forest management.

### 2.3.9.9 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated on forestry MPAs.

### 2.3.9.10 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Permitting of forestry MPA lands for major transmission and transportation rights-of-way will be allowed with stipulations to protect or mitigate the loss of sawtimber or firewood.

### 2.3.9.11 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources will be allowed for underground mining on forestry MPAs. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open pit mining will not be allowed within the priority use zones for forestry sawtimber or firewood unless mitigation is applied to replace those forest lands disturbed during mining activities.

### 2.3.9.12 Coal

Leasing of coal resources for underground mining will be allowed in forestry MPAs. Leasing of coal for surface mining will not be allowed within the sawtimber or firewood priority areas unless mitigation is undertaken to replace those forest lands disturbed during mining activities.

### 2.3.9.13 Oil and Gas

Leasing of lands for oil and gas resources will be allowed with stipulations to protect or mitigate the loss of sawtimber or firewood.

## 2.3.10 Utility Corridors

Utility corridor routes are federal lands that are suitable for potential and existing major linear rights-of-way. Priority will be given to lease these lands for the routing of major electrical, liquid product and gas transmission lines, and regional transportation routes. Where corridors are shown on an ACEC or potential ACEC (RMP map), development proposals will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis with priority given to protection and preservation of the important plant values present. Placement of major linear rights-of-way is encouraged within designated corridors and is based upon environmental criteria. Other land uses will be allowed on these lands, provided they do not interfere with the routing and use of these corridors.

### 2.3.10.1 Wildlife

Wildlife management practices will be allowed, provided they do not conflict with construction or maintenance activities within a utility corridor.



## CHAPTER 2

### 2.3.10.2 Recreation

Development of recreation sites will be allowed as long as they do not interfere with the siting of corridors.

### 2.3.10.3 Visual

Development of utility corridors will occur subject to meeting visual contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.10.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management of candidate and sensitive plants and remnant vegetation associations will be allowed within utility corridors.

### 2.3.10.5 Wild Horses

Wild horse use will be allowed within utility corridors. Construction and maintenance of utilities will have to mitigate any impacts to wild horses within the wild horse herd management area.

### 2.3.10.6 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing will be allowed within utility corridors. Limits will be placed on livestock grazing management practices to prevent conflict with construction or maintenance activities within a utility corridor.

### 2.3.10.7 Soils

Soils management practices will be permitted within utility corridors.

### 2.3.10.8 Cultural

Restrictions will be placed on development within utility corridors to protect or adequately mitigate significant cultural sites.

### 2.3.10.9 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated within utility corridors.

### 2.3.10.10 Forestry

Forest management practices will be allowed within utility corridors provided no conflict exists with the priority use.

### 2.3.10.11 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining will be allowed on utility corridors, provided stipulations are added to the lease to prevent subsidence. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open-pit mining will not be allowed within a designated right-of-way corridor unless stipulations are implemented to adequately mitigate impacts.

### 2.3.10.12 Coal

Compatibility is the same as that described above for oil shale.

### 2.3.10.13 Oil and Gas

Oil and gas leasing will be allowed within corridors as long as exploration and development does not preclude future use of the corridor.

### 2.3.10.14 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will not be allowed unless the materials could be extracted without interfering with or changing the route of a designated right-of-way corridor.

### 2.3.10.15 Community Expansion

Community expansion will not be allowed within a designated corridor unless the expansion use is commensurate with the designated use of the corridor.

## 2.3.11 Oil Shale - Open Pit

These are federal lands that contain known oil shale reserves of 25 gallons per ton or more and are potentially recoverable by open-pit mining. These lands are committed to the potential future development of shale oil. Priority will be given to management of only these lands for future leasing and development for shale oil production by open-pit mining. Other land uses will be allowed on these lands provided they do not interfere with the management of these lands for future shale oil production.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.3.11.1 Oil Shale - Multimineral/Underground

Leasing for multimineral recovery in this MPA will be allowed for open-pit mining. Leasing for underground mining will be allowed in the open-pit area provided that future open-pit mining is not precluded.

### 2.3.11.2 Wildlife

Intensive wildlife management practices or habitat projects will not be permitted in open-pit MPAs with active development. Habitat will be managed for in open-pit priority areas not proposed for development. Replacement of habitat will be required following completion of any oil shale projects.

### 2.3.11.3 Recreation

Development of recreation sites in oil shale open-pit MPAs will not occur until after site reclamation following oil shale development.

### 2.3.11.4 Visual

Protection of visually sensitive areas will occur in oil shale open-pit MPAs until such protection conflicts with open pit operations.

### 2.3.11.5 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management of candidate and sensitive plants and remnant vegetation associations will be allowed within oil shale open-pit MPAs to the extent such management does not preclude leasing and development of these MPAs.

### 2.3.11.6 Wild Horses

Wild horse habitat improvement projects will not be implemented in areas of potential development. Mitigation will consist of reclamation to replace forage losses. Wild horses could be excluded from an area; however, any wild horse impacts will require mitigation in the short term.

### 2.3.11.7 Livestock Grazing

Grazing will be permitted in nondevelopment areas but excluded in active mining zones. Intensive management practices or range improvement projects will be permitted only as long as oil shale development is not imminent. Reclamation efforts to replace livestock forage following mine abandonment will be required.

### 2.3.11.8 Soils

Soil management actions and projects are incompatible and will not occur concurrently within active open-pit mining operations. Soil management actions and projects could be performed in priority areas assessed to have low potential for development in the near future. Reclamation efforts will be required following mine abandonment to restore soil resource conditions.

### 2.3.11.9 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be adequately mitigated before surface disturbance within oil shale open-pit MPAs.

### 2.3.11.10 Paleontology

Significant paleontological resources will be adequately mitigated upon discovery within oil shale open-pit MPAs.

### 2.3.11.11 Forestry

Forest management and product sales will continue within oil shale open-pit MPAs. When mining occurs, proper disposal of timber products will be required.

### 2.3.11.12 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Major utility rights-of-way will not be allowed in areas of active or imminent mining.

### 2.3.11.13 Oil and Gas

Development of oil and gas reserves will not be allowed concurrently with open-pit mining; however, leasing and development of oil and gas on oil shale open-pit MPAs can occur provided a special stipulation protecting the oil shale resource is added to the lease and provided development does not preclude future open pit mining.

### 2.3.11.14 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will not be allowed within an active or imminent development area.

## 2.3.12 Oil Shale - Underground

These are federal lands that contain known oil shale reserves and that are committed to oil shale development by underground extraction. Priority will be given to management of these lands for the potential future leasing and development of the shale oil resource by underground



## CHAPTER 2

methods. Other land uses will be allowed provided they do not interfere with the management of these lands for potential future shale oil production.

### 2.3.12.1 Wildlife

Wildlife management practices will be allowed provided they do not interfere with existing or proposed oil shale underground development on these MPAs. Locations of habitat improvement projects and reclamation stipulations will be included in the lease and mine plan.

### 2.3.12.2 Recreation

Recreation development will be allowed unless it conflicts with oil shale development within these MPAs.

### 2.3.12.3 Visual

Sensitive visual areas will be protected in oil shale underground MPAs. Development will conform to contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.12.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management practices will be allowed on oil shale underground MPAs. Stipulations will be necessary to avoid location of surface facilities in areas of known candidate or sensitive plant locations or selected remnant vegetation associations.

### 2.3.12.5 Wild Horses

The potential for oil shale development in the near future will be assessed prior to implementation of wild horse projects. Stipulations to mitigate adverse impacts to wild horses will be included in the lease and mine plan.

### 2.3.12.6 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing will continue in these areas until mining begins, at which time limits will be placed on livestock grazing within areas of active mining operations. Stipulations to maintain existing range improvements and to direct reclamation efforts to replace lost forage will be required. The potential for oil shale development in the near future will be assessed before implementation of intensive livestock grazing management plans or projects.

### 2.3.12.7 Soils

The potential for oil shale development in the near future will be assessed prior to implementation of intensive soil management plans or projects. Reclamation stipulations will be included in the lease and mine plan.

### 2.3.12.8 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be protected or adequately mitigated within the oil shale underground MPAs. Some restrictions will be placed on oil shale development during the construction phase to minimize impacts to cultural resources.

### 2.3.12.9 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in oil shale underground MPAs.

### 2.3.12.10 Forestry

Forest product management and sales will continue in oil shale underground MPAs. Disposal of timber products during development and reclamation practices following project completion will be required.

### 2.3.12.11 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Designation of utility corridors and subsequent right-of-way grants within the corridor will be allowed, provided the designation does not interfere with mine geometry, mine layout, and method of extraction.

### 2.3.12.12 Oil Shale - Open Pit

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open-pit mining may occur provided that such methods are proven to be technologically and economically feasible.

### 2.3.12.13 Oil and Gas

Oil and gas leasing may occur on oil shale underground MPA lands as long as it does not preclude or interfere with oil shale development. Stipulations will be included in oil and gas leases on these lands that will assure the protection of the oil shale resource.

### 2.3.12.14 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will be allowed, provided they do not conflict with the development of oil shale.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.3.13 Coal - Underground Only

These are federal lands that contain known coal reserves and/or medium to high potential coal resources and that are committed to coal development by underground extraction. Priority will be given to leasing and development for coal production only on these lands. Other land uses will be allowed on these lands provided they do not interfere with the management of these lands for coal production.

#### 2.3.13.1 Wildlife

Wildlife management practices will be allowed in these MPAs provided they do not interfere with existing or proposed underground coal development. Locations of habitat improvement projects and reclamation stipulations will be included in the lease and approved mine plan.

#### 2.3.13.2 Recreation

Recreation development will be allowed unless it conflicts with coal development.

#### 2.3.13.3 Visual

Sensitive visual areas will be protected. Coal development will conform to contrast rating requirements.

#### 2.3.13.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management practices will be allowed in coal-underground only MPAs. Stipulations will be applied to leasing and/or development activities to avoid location of surface facilities in areas of known plant locations.

#### 2.3.13.5 Wild Horses

The potential for coal development in the near future must be assessed before implementation of wild horse projects. Stipulations to mitigate adverse impacts to wild horses will be included in the lease and mine plan.

#### 2.3.13.6 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing will continue in these areas until mining begins, at which time limits will be placed on livestock grazing within areas of active mining operations. Stipulations to maintain existing range improvements and to direct reclamation efforts to replace lost forage will be required. The potential for coal development in the near future will be assessed before implementation of intensive livestock grazing management plans or projects.

#### 2.3.13.7 Soils

The potential for coal development in the near future will be assessed before implementation of intensive management plans or projects. Reclamation stipulations dealing with soil productivity will be included in the lease and mine plan.

#### 2.3.13.8 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in coal underground MPAs. Some restrictions will be placed on coal development during the construction phase to minimize impacts to cultural resources.

#### 2.3.13.9 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in coal underground MPAs.

#### 2.3.13.10 Forestry

Forest product management and sales will continue in this MPA. Disposal of timber products during development and reclamation practices following coal project completion will be required.

#### 2.3.13.11 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Designation of utility corridors and subsequent right-of-way grants within the corridor will be allowed, provided the designation does not interfere with mine geometry, mine layout and method of extraction.

#### 2.3.13.12 Oil and Gas

Concurrent development of oil and gas with coal will be encouraged as long as it does not result in a significant loss of federal coal.

#### 2.3.13.13 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will be allowed, provided they do not conflict with the development of coal.

#### 2.3.13.14 Community Expansion

Land title transfer by either Recreation and Public Purpose or sales that are physically compatible with underground mining will be considered on a case-by-case basis for community expansion. Subsidence concerns may be mitigated by special stipulations or restrictions attached to the Recreation and Public Purpose or sales action.



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### 2.3.14 Coal - Surface and/or Underground

These are federal lands that contain known coal reserves and/or medium to high potential coal resources and are recoverable by surface and/or underground mining methods. These lands are committed to the development of coal. Priority will be given to leasing and development for coal production on these lands. Mining of coal by either surface methods or underground methods can occur within these lands. Mining concurrently by both surface and underground methods can occur, provided sufficient overburden exists to allow for safe and environmentally sound resource extraction. Other land uses will be allowed on these lands, provided they do not interfere with the management of these lands for coal production. Investments in land treatments and improvement projects for intensive management of other resources should be postponed until surface coal development is completed and the site is rehabilitated. If leased and developed for underground extraction of the coal resources, other uses can occur as stated in the previous Section 2.3.13, Coal - Underground Only. If leased and developed for surface mining of the coal resources, other uses can occur as long as they do not interfere with the management priority on these lands for coal production.

#### 2.3.14.1 Wildlife

Intensive wildlife management practices or habitat projects will not be permitted in coal priority areas with active development. Habitat will be managed for in those parts of the coal priority areas not proposed for active development. Replacement of wildlife habitat will be required following coal project completion.

#### 2.3.14.2 Recreation

Recreation areas will not be developed until after surface rehabilitation following coal development occurs.

#### 2.3.14.3 Visual

Protection of visually sensitive areas will occur in these MPAs up to time of active mine development.

#### 2.3.14.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Candidate and sensitive plants and remnant vegetation associations will be managed in coal MPAs.

#### 2.3.14.5 Wild Horses

Wild horse projects will not be implemented in areas of potential coal development. Mitigation will consist of reclamation to replace forage losses.

#### 2.3.14.6 Livestock Grazing

Grazing will be permitted in nondevelopment areas but excluded in active mining zones. Intensive management practices or range improvement projects will be permitted only as long as coal development is not imminent. Reclamation efforts to replace livestock forage following mine abandonment will be required.

#### 2.3.14.7 Soils

Soil management actions and projects are incompatible and will not occur concurrently with surface mining operations. Soil management actions and projects could be performed in priority areas assessed to have low potential for coal development in the near future. Reclamation efforts will be required to restore soil resource conditions following coal mine abandonment.

#### 2.3.14.8 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be adequately mitigated before surface disturbance within these MPAs.

#### 2.3.14.9 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be adequately mitigated upon discovery in these MPAs.

#### 2.3.14.10 Forestry

Forest management and product sales will continue within coal surface MPAs. When coal mining occurs, proper disposal of timber products will be required.

#### 2.3.14.11 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Major utility rights-of-way will not be allowed in areas of active or imminent mining.

#### 2.3.14.12 Oil and Gas

Development of oil and gas resources will not be allowed concurrently with surface coal mining; however, leasing and development of oil and gas can occur as long as it does not preclude future development of the priority coal resource.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.3.14.13 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will be allowed provided they don't conflict with the development of coal.

### 2.3.14.14 Community Expansion

Community expansion will not be feasible in coal surface MPAs.

## 2.3.15 Oil and Gas

These are federal lands that are leased for oil and gas or are suitable for leasing and contain known oil and gas reserves or potential oil and gas resources. Priority will be given to leasing and development of oil and gas within known geologic structures and their future redelineations. Other land uses will be allowed, provided they do not interfere with the management of these lands for oil and gas production.

### 2.3.15.1 Wildlife

Wildlife management practices will be allowed provided they do not conflict with oil and gas development. Critical wildlife habitats will be protected by seasonal and reclamation stipulations placed on oil and gas activities.

### 2.3.15.2 Recreation

Recreation development will be allowed within oil and gas MPAs unless it conflicts with oil and gas development.

### 2.3.15.3 Visual

Sensitive visual areas will be protected in oil and gas MPAs. Development will conform to visual contrast rating requirements.

### 2.3.15.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Stipulations will be placed on oil and gas activities to avoid development in areas of known plant locations.

### 2.3.15.5 Wild Horses

Wild horse projects to provide forage and water will be allowed as long as they do not conflict with oil and gas development. Stipulations on oil and gas development will be applied to maintain habitat conditions.

### 2.3.15.6 Livestock Grazing

Grazing will be permitted in oil and gas MPAs. Limits may be necessary on range improvement projects and stocking rates in these areas. Stipulations to maintain existing range improvements and to direct reclamation efforts will be required within oil and gas MPAs.

### 2.3.15.7 Soils

Soil resource management will continue to maintain or enhance existing conditions in nondevelopment areas. Avoidance of fragile soils and reclamation stipulations will be required for oil and gas actions.

### 2.3.15.8 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in oil and gas MPAs. Some restrictions will be placed on oil and gas development during the construction phase to minimize impacts to cultural resources.

### 2.3.15.9 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated in oil and gas MPAs.

### 2.3.15.10 Forestry

Forest product management and sales will continue in oil and gas MPAs. Disposal of timber products that are impacted from oil and gas surface disturbances will be stipulated in applications for permit to drill and other development plans.

### 2.3.15.11 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Placement of major linear rights-of-way will be allowed within oil and gas MPAs.

### 2.3.15.12 Oil Shale

Leasing for multiminerall recovery will be allowed for underground mining with stipulations that protect the oil and gas resources. Leasing for multiminerall recovery will be allowed for open-pit mining in the oil and gas priority area, with provisions to develop the oil and gas resources prior to oil shale development. Oil shale development by underground methods in the oil and gas priority area may occur, provided mine layout, method of extraction and mine geometry does not interrupt or preclude oil and gas development and production. Leasing of oil shale for open-pit mining will only be allowed with provisions to develop oil and gas resources before oil shale development.



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### 2.3.15.13 Coal

Coal development may occur in oil and gas MPAs, provided mine layout, method of extraction and mine geometry does not interrupt or preclude oil and gas development and production in low coal potential areas. Concurrent development of oil/gas and coal resources that does not result in a significant loss of oil and gas production or bypasses significant tonnages of federal coal will be encouraged. Conflicts involving near equal value of coal versus oil and gas will result in favor of oil and gas development. Leasing of coal resources for surface mining methods will be allowed in oil and gas MPAs only with provisions to develop the oil and gas resources before coal development.

### 2.3.15.14 Mineral Materials

Material sales will be allowed in oil and gas MPAs.

### 2.3.15.15 Community Expansion

Oil and gas lands will be suitable for certain types of community expansion as needed by local communities for purposes that are compatible with oil and gas development. All Recreation and Public Purpose actions will be restricted on a case-by-case review for oil and gas development conflicts. Land title transfers by sale will recognize the prior authorized rights of oil and gas leases.

## 2.3.16 Community Expansion

Federal lands suitable for the enhancement of state and local governmental units for community expansion and development purposes are included in community expansion MPAs. These lands will be available through the Recreation and Public Purposes Act; direct sales; and exchanges and leases to locate schools, hospitals, parks, sanitary landfills and similar facilities. Community expansion land parcels are located within a 5-mile radius of Meeker and Rangely.

Priority will be given to processing requests to use these lands for community development and sewer, electric and road access rights-of-way, in support of community expansion. Other land uses which detract from the community development character of the land will be restricted.

### 2.3.16.1 Recreation

Lands with recreation potential in community expansion MPAs could be more suitable for management by local governments as part of community expansion.

### 2.3.16.2 Visual

Limited protection of visual resources will occur.

### 2.3.16.3 Soils

Limited soil management practices will be allowed before land disposal. On-the-ground projects will have to be compatible with community expansion projects.

### 2.3.16.4 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be adequately mitigated before land exchange, sale, or lease.

### 2.3.16.5 Coal

Those coal underground mining activities that are physically compatible with community expansion will be allowed. Coal leasing for underground mining will not be allowed if it detracts from the values of the land for community expansion. Leasing of coal resources for surface mining will not be allowed in community expansion MPAs unless stipulations are implemented to adequately mitigate impacts.

### 2.3.16.6 Oil and Gas

Leasing and development of oil and gas resources will be allowed as long as it does not conflict with community development. However, the prior authorized rights of existing oil and gas leases will be recognized in Recreation and Public Purposes actions and land title transfers by sale for community expansion.

### 2.3.16.7 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales that are needed for community expansion will be allowed. Sand and gravel mine sites in these MPAs that are abandoned and reclaimed will be available for community expansion.

### 2.3.16.8 Wildlife

Wildlife use will be permitted on community expansion MPAs until time of land disposal. Intensive wildlife management practices or projects not compatible with community expansion will be prohibited.



## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

### 2.3.16.9 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Resource values on community expansion MPAs will be protected prior to land disposal.

### 2.3.16.10 Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing will be allowed on community expansion MPAs until time of land disposal. Intensive management practices and range management projects should be carefully considered due to potential future disposal of these lands.

### 2.3.16.11 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be identified and evaluated in cooperation with the Colorado BLM Geologic Advisory Group and mitigated, as appropriate, prior to disposal.

### 2.3.16.12 Forestry

Intensive forest management practices will not be allowed. However, the harvest of timber products will be allowed until these lands are used for disposal.

### 2.3.16.13 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Large scale, highly visible projects will be rerouted away from federal lands adjacent to existing communities and potential community expansion lands.

### 2.3.16.14 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for open-pit mining will not be allowed in community expansion MPAs. Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources for underground mining activities which are physically compatible with community expansion will be allowed. Such leasing will not be allowed if it detracts from the value of the land for community expansion.

## 2.3.17 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

These five areas contain important plant values which merit special management attention. Management will be directed to ensure protection and perpetuation of the important values present. Other resource uses will be allowed provided they do not conflict with resource values or management practices.

### 2.3.17.1 Wildlife

Wildlife use will be allowed within the ACECs. Limitations will be placed on wildlife habitat improvement projects to protect important ACEC values.

### 2.3.17.2 Recreation

Recreation activities will be allowed, provided they do not interfere with the values present. Development of recreational sites will be allowed if it is compatible with ACEC status.

### 2.3.17.3 Visual

Visual resources will be protected.

### 2.3.17.4 Candidate and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations

Management of these resources is fully compatible with ACECs.

### 2.3.17.5 Wild Horses

Some limitations on wild horses within ACECs is possible. However, if those limitations interfere with their free-roaming behavior or limit use of important habitat, the wild horses would have to be given priority.

### 2.3.17.6 Livestock Grazing

Limitations will be placed on livestock grazing and range management practices to protect priority values.

### 2.3.17.7 Soils

Soils management is fully compatible with ACECs.

### 2.3.17.8 Cultural

Significant cultural resources will be protected or adequately mitigated within ACECs.

### 2.3.17.9 Paleontological Resources

Significant paleontological resources will be protected or adequately mitigated within ACECs.



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### 2.3.17.10 Oil Shale

Leasing of oil shale and/or multimineral resources will be allowed for underground mining within ACECs with NSO stipulations added to the lease to protect the surface environment. Leasing for open pit mining will not be allowed.

### 2.3.17.11 Coal

Leasing of coal for underground mining will be allowed within ACECs with NSO stipulations to protect the surface environment. Leasing of coal for surface mining will not be allowed.

### 2.3.17.12 Oil and Gas

Leasing of oil and gas within ACECs will be allowed with NSO stipulations applied to protect important values present. Development plans under existing leases will require that priority consideration be given to protection and perpetuation of important ACEC values.

### 2.3.17.13 Forestry

Forest management practices will not be allowed within the ACECs.

### 2.3.17.14 Major Linear Rights-of-Way

Location of major utility and transportation corridors will not be allowed for regional transportation roads, liquid and gas production transmission lines, and electrical transmission lines unless such development can take place without adverse effect on priority ACEC values.

### 2.3.17.15 Mineral Materials

Mineral material sales will not be allowed within ACECs.

### 2.3.17.16 Community Expansion

Community expansion will not be allowed within the ACECs.

## 2.3.18 Potential Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

If designated, these two areas would be managed with other resource uses allowed as described under Section 2.3.17. Pending a state decision and ongoing monitoring, these areas will be managed under interim management policy guidelines for ACECs. Formal resource use decisions (i.e., to allow or disallow certain uses) will not be made at this time on the two potential ACECs, with the exception of limiting off-road vehicle use to existing roads and trails. These areas will be provided protection on a case-by-case basis to the extent such protection does not unduly hinder or preclude the exercise of valid existing rights. Protection will include all feasible actions available to ensure that those qualities/important resources present are not damaged or otherwise subjected to adverse changes pending possible designation. Management of the important plant values within these two areas will essentially occur according to planned actions described in Section 2.2.10 - Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, and Sensitive Plants and Remnant Vegetation Associations.













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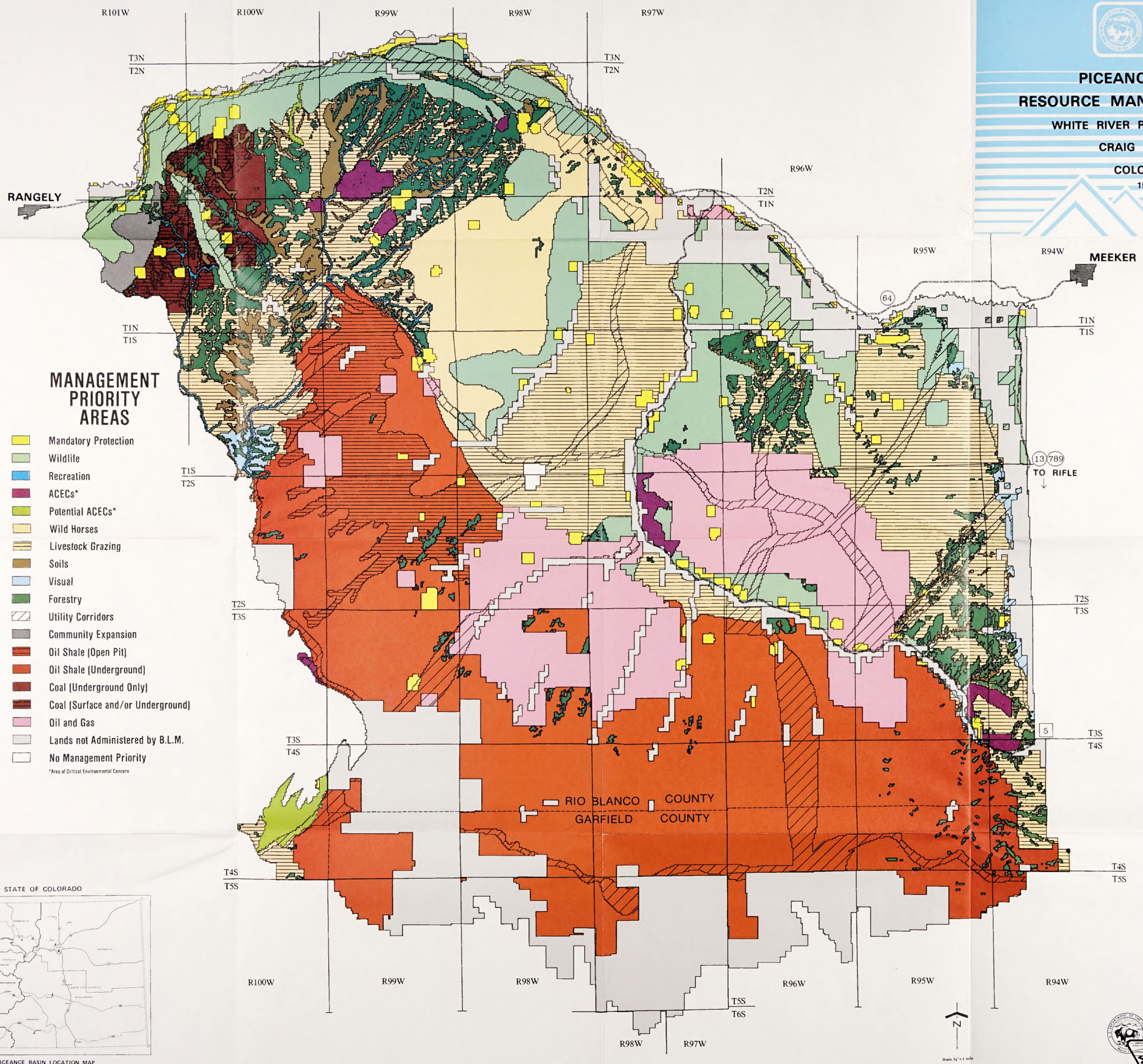


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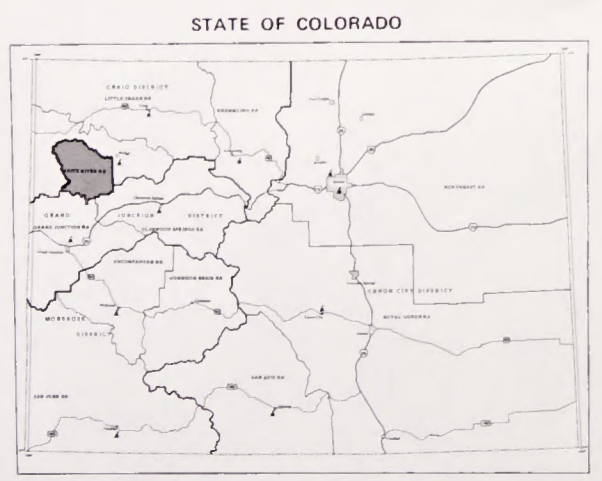
**PICEANCE BASIN  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**  
WHITE RIVER RESOURCE AREA  
CRAIG DISTRICT  
COLORADO  
1987



**MANAGEMENT PRIORITY AREAS**

- Mandatory Protection
- Wildlife
- Recreation
- ACECs\*
- Potential ACECs\*
- Wild Horses
- Livestock Grazing
- Soils
- Visual
- Forestry
- Utility Corridors
- Community Expansion
- Oil Shale (Open Pit)
- Oil Shale (Underground)
- Coal (Underground Only)
- Coal (Surface and/or Underground)
- Oil and Gas
- Lands not Administered by B.L.M.
- No Management Priority

\*Area of Critical Environmental Concern



PICEANCE BASIN LOCATION MAP

**NOTE TO MAP USERS**  
Management priority areas (MPAs) are shown on this map for the lands where BLM has either surface ownership, mineral ownership, or both. However, it is important to understand that MPAs shown on this map and related decisions within Section 2.3 of the RMP apply only to those rights on the land for which BLM has administrative authority. As an example, if the map depicts a surface resource MPA for a certain area, and a portion of the lands in the area are lands on which BLM has only subsurface mineral ownership, surface management decisions relative to non-BLM surface lands are not within BLM's authority and, therefore, do not apply. In such a case, only the decisions pertinent to the specific subsurface federal mineral resource present would apply. MPA decisions on split estate lands are not intended to interfere with the rights of surface owners.

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Craig District Office  
455 Emerson Street  
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COS Map produced February 1987 by C.S.O. GIS Graphics Staff.  
Map content from White River R.A. AMS MOSS Digital Data Base.











